

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE TRUSTEES

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL

FOR

IDIOTIC AND FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH.

OCTOBER, 1875.

BOSTON:

WRIGHT & POTTER, STATE PRINTERS,

79 MILK STREET (CORNER OF FEDERAL).

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Mass. School for feeble-minded, Haltham
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.....No. 28.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR IDIOTIC AND FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH, }
BOSTON, NOV. 17, 1875. }

Hon. OLIVER WARNER, *Secretary of State.*

DEAR SIR :—I have the honor to transmit to you a copy of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of this institution, for the use of His Excellency the Governor, and of the legislature.

Faithfully yours,

SAM'L G. HOWE.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

TRUSTEES' REPORT.

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR IDIOTIC AND FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH, }
BOSTON, Sept. 30, 1875. }

To the Members of the Corporation.

GENTLEMEN:—The undersigned, Trustees, to whom you and the Executive of the Commonwealth have committed the care of this institution, respectfully submit the following Report for the year ending September 30, 1875:—

NUMBER OF INMATES.

The total number of pupils reported at the close of last year was 102. There have entered since, 35; 15 have been discharged, and two have died; so that the present number is 120. The average number in attendance during the past year was about 90.

The number of applicants goes on steadily increasing. This fact arises partly from the increase in the number of idiotic children which must be looked for with the advance of population, but chiefly from the rising esteem and appreciation in which the School is held.

Applications come to us from far and near,—from the West and South,—and this without solicitation on our part, or any effort to make the establishment more widely known than it already is. On the contrary, pains are taken to inform parents thus making application, of the existence of schools of the same sort nearer their own homes. In many instances, however, they prefer placing their children at this institution. Pupils thus come to us from Texas, Missouri, and other distant States, as well as from those more naturally falling within the jurisdiction of the School. Such pupils are paid for by their parents and friends, or by their respective States.

If our numbers continue to increase at the present rapid rate, we shall be called on, ere-long, to provide additional accommodations. It is necessary, however, to resist the pressure for the admission of such pupils as are entirely unable to derive any real benefit from the modes of training and instruction pursued here, and to guard against those other causes of undue increase in numbers, which have been frequently and forcibly set forth in the reports of the General Superintendent, Dr. S. G. Howe.

SANITARY CONDITION.

The health record of the community at large has been below the average during the past year. The long protracted cold weather, together with various minor causes, led to a variety of epidemics among children. Scarlet fever was very prevalent throughout Boston and vicinity, and the institution did not escape the general contagion. Immediately on the

appearance of this dangerous malady within the walls of the School, wards for the sick were established, and notice was at once sent to all parents and friends. The majority replying that they preferred to leave their children at the institution, the school was not broken up. Every precaution, however, was taken to prevent the spread of the disorder; and no effort was spared in ministering to those whom it had already attacked. Considering the general defective organization of idiotic children, their lack of stamina, and their want of vitality and resisting-force, it was feared that the malady would make great ravages among the inmates of the institution. Such, however, was not the result, only two cases having terminated fatally.

The general health of the inmates during the rest of the time has been as good as usual, and the work has been continued without interruption.

DISCIPLINE AND ORDER.

We are happy to report that the discipline of the School has been carried on very satisfactorily, and that perfect order has prevailed during the year. The good conduct of the pupils has been very creditable both to themselves and to their teachers. Their obedience and habitual docility have been remarkably uninterrupted. This is owing, not only to the judicious and kind mode of treatment pursued, but also to the great attention and watchfulness bestowed upon their diet. The utmost care is necessary in regulating the diet of any children, but more especially of those who are imperfect, either physically

or mentally ; otherwise their stomachs become disordered, and hence arise a general derangement of the system and disturbance of the intellect and temper.

INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING.

The general course of training and instruction pursued in the School has been the same as in former years, and has been so often set forth in the reports that it need not be repeated here. A number of improvements, such as occasion seemed to require and experience to warrant, have, however, been effected in the divers departments of the establishment.

The enforcement of the rules respecting bodily exercise in the gymnasium, as well as in the playgrounds, has been productive of very satisfactory results, the general bearing and appearance of the children improving wonderfully under the present system, which includes, dancing, military drill, the use of light dumb-bells, etc.

The condition of the brain depending so much, even in persons of sound normal constitutions, on that of the body, it will readily be seen how important, in the case of these unfortunate children, who are to be raised as nearly as possible to the level of ordinary human beings, is the development of the muscular system and the gradual awakening of the cerebral powers by means of moderate but regular exercise. Without this the improvement of the memory and other mental functions would be small, and not to be relied on.

Among the many cases of improvement worthy of note which our records show for the past year, is one

which is specially interesting from the low and almost hopeless condition whence the subject has been gradually raised.

M. J. has been a pupil of this institution for several years. When first received here, she was unable to walk or to do the least thing for herself. Her mental condition was very low, and she seemed nearly paralytic. She had never worn any article of clothing, with the exception of a chemise; and appeared, in short, rather like one of the brute creation, than a member of the human family. The possibility of ameliorating her condition seemed at first very doubtful, and all exertions in this direction of little avail. By means of patient and long-continued effort, however, she has been trained so as to be able to walk for some distance alone and unsupported, and she already shows a gratifying amount of intelligence.

In all such cases as this, the bodily amelioration can easily be measured by the increase of muscular strength and dexterity, by the improved color of the skin, by the weight (a regular record of which is made and preserved), by the increased animation of the countenance, and by various other indications analogous to these; while the improvement in the mental and moral condition can only be detected by the most careful and minute observation. Indeed, the feeble rudiments of mind and of conscience which these unfortunate children possess, depend so absolutely upon the condition of the body for their elevation or depression, that it seems almost necessary to consider the mental and moral functions as forming

in them a part of the physical organization, and thus to labor to save both mind and body together.

VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS OF THE INMATES.

We do not think it best, however, to extend the exercises beyond certain limits. The moment gymnastics cease to be amusing, they cease to benefit the patient. All feelings of monotony should be guarded against.

This principle, as well as the desire to provide our pupils with the means of earning at least a partial livelihood after they have left the institution, has led to the establishment of a workshop, in which the boys are taught to use various tools. They pick hair, make over mattresses, weave door-mats, make brooms, seat cane-bottomed chairs, etc. Some work out of doors, and learn the use of gardening tools; others saw wood, assist in the laundry and in cleaning the house, sweep and dust the rooms, make the beds, help the attendants in various other ways, and do a number of "chores" about the house and grounds.

The girls are taught to wash and wipe dishes, to set and clear away the tables in the dining-hall, to sweep, to dust, to sew, to make beds, and assist those who are not able to dress and undress themselves; and so render all the help they can in the performance of household duties.

Our object in all this is not to keep the children out of mischief, although their very small mental calibre renders their hours of intellectual effort in the school-room necessarily short; not to get work out

of them, since it is much harder to teach them to work than to perform the labor one's self. It is to develop them, so far as their organization permits, into healthy, active, and industrious men and women, who, when they return to their families at the expiration of their term of instruction and training here, may no longer be regarded by those among whom they live as brute beasts or helpless imbeciles, but that they may be able to bear a helping hand in whatever goes on at home, and even, if possible, earn a partial self-support. They will thus be treated with greater respect and consideration by those among whom their lot is cast, than could have been the case had they been allowed to continue in their original brutish and degraded condition.

We are happy to say that this expectation has already been justified in a number of cases, and there is every reason to hope that these instances will go on increasing from year to year.

STATISTICS ON IDIOCY.

We continue to gather and file away as many facts as possible respecting the physical condition of the idiots, their parentage, their habits, weight, and growth, and their condition after they leave our School. All these form a valuable store of information for physiologists, and especially for the student of idiocy and its treatment. These facts, while they serve at present as aids to the understanding of each individual case, and for the application of the proper modes of training, may be very useful at some future day in deciding important physiological ques-

tions, solving psychological problems, and proving the importance of bringing about certain fundamental changes in the physical life of our community.

TEACHERS AND OFFICERS.

It has not been found necessary to make any changes in the corps of teachers and officers employed by the institution for this year.

This circumstance is to be regarded as fortunate, since every new-comer has to undergo a certain degree of training, and, so to speak, of initiation, in order to become properly fitted for an instructor or companion of idiotic youth.

The education of defective children is a task of more than ordinary responsibility. The teacher is expected to rouse the dormant energies of the pupil, to kindle the feeble sparks of mind which are to be found in a disordered human organism, to ascertain the actual condition of each faculty, and to employ the proper means for calling it into exercise. In order to accomplish all this, she must be a person of more than common character and ability; and it will readily be seen that too great care cannot be shown in the selection of those to whom the training and care of idiotic children are to be intrusted. It must always be borne in mind that the lower the mental calibre of the pupil, the higher should be the capacity of the instructor.

Nearly all the officers and teachers employed in the service of the institution are women. It has always been the policy of its management to employ women to carry on this peculiar but truly missionary

work, since it is generally admitted that they possess in an eminent degree the tenderness of heart, patience, keenness of observation, and practical spirit of benevolence which are indispensable to the carrying on of a work of this kind.

FINANCES.

The Report of the Treasurer, F. W. G. May, Esq., is hereto appended, and sets forth the financial condition of the institution.

Cash on hand, October 1, 1874,	. . .	\$663 59
Receipts for the year (aside from loans),	. . .	27,288 93
		<hr/>
		\$27,952 52

Paid out for current expenses and 20,500 feet of		
land,	\$31,070 99
Cash on hand, October 1, 1875,	. . .	881 53
		<hr/>
		\$31,952 52

Leaving a debt of \$4,000 still due.

This Report is accompanied by an analysis of the Steward's account, giving all the items of the expenditures.

The accounts are audited monthly by a committee of the Board of Trustees. They are all properly vouched, and the Treasurer pays no money except upon requisition from the Auditing Committee.

The Trustees earnestly request that the members of the Corporation will satisfy themselves, by actual examination, that the funds of the institution are wisely and beneficently applied, and then use their personal influence, not only to have the annual appro-

priations sustained, but to bring the establishment under the notice of those wealthy and benevolent persons who may be disposed to make liberal bequests to public charitable institutions.

The various inventories of property which we are required by law to render annually, are herewith submitted.

REPAIRS AND PURCHASE OF LAND.

Considerable expense has been incurred in making ordinary repairs on the buildings and improvements on the grounds. The largest item, however, was for the purchase and fencing in of the lot of land to the east of our premises, containing 20,500 square feet. This was a very advantageous transaction for the institution. It gave us more land, and just where it was most needed. It removed the only obstacle between us and N Street; so that our lot now extends from Eighth Street on the north to Ninth Street on the south, and from M Street on the west to N Street on the east. There is thus no longer any risk of our premises being encroached upon by the rapid growth of the neighborhood. Our access to the sea remains open, and there is little probability of our being disturbed in that direction for a long time to come. We have thus obtained a much-needed enlargement of the grounds, as well as perfect security against all impediments to ventilation.

It is very important for all youth to have plenty of room for play and exercise in the open air, and especially for such a class as make up our family.

NEEDED REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

The regular income of the institution, from state appropriations and various other sources, frugally and economically applied, will suffice for all ordinary expenses, but is not large enough to cover the cost of any extensive repairs or improvements. The following is a statement of those which are most needed:—

The main building has been a long time in service, and the exterior needs repainting in order to prevent its becoming unsightly and rotten.

That part of the building which was the old poor-house is already somewhat dilapidated. It needs new floors, new plastering, repainting, and additional closets.

The workshop is still heated by a furnace. Steam radiators, or coils of pipe, should be put in and connected with the large boiler.

This change will not only save the expense of running an extra furnace, but will lessen the danger of fire to its minimum.

The present system for drainage is imperfect. There were no sewers when the building was put up, and a temporary arrangement was made for carrying the drainage into the sea. The city has since constructed an underground sewer on Eighth Street, with which our front building ought to be connected. The grade of part of Ninth Street has already been raised, and as a sewer will eventually be constructed there, the level of which will be two or three feet above that of our present sewerage, our system of

drainage should be so raised and altered as to make it possible to connect it with the public sewer.

A change in the location of the laundry is imperatively needed. It now stands under the dormitories, and, in spite of all precautions, the smell from the soiled clothes and washing materials rises through the floors, and renders the atmosphere of the rooms above unpleasant and unwholesome. The erection of a new and separate laundry is therefore of the greatest importance. It would contribute much to the health and convenience of the household, and would prove, in the long run, the most economical arrangement. If this cannot be accomplished, however, the cellar under the workshop should be fitted up as a laundry, and the household thus relieved from the effects of its present situation.

The stable needs thorough repairing, and some arrangement for ventilation.

The rear part of the play-grounds should be filled up and levelled with the street, so that the water may be prevented from standing there.

The driveway needs to be gravelled, and most of the walks either gravelled or concreted.

Every one of the above-mentioned improvements and repairs is so clearly necessary, that it is hoped that their mere enumeration will show forth the importance of their being undertaken at the first seasonable opportunity.

CONCLUSION.

In closing this Report, the Trustees are sorry to inform the Corporation that the General Superin-

tendent, Dr. S. G. Howe, has expressed his desire to be relieved from the duties and responsibilities of the management of the School. He has rendered his services gratis to the institution since the date of its foundation, and has only of late years received a small sum for travelling and personal expenses. Failing health now obliges him to seek a diminution of anxiety and care, and he therefore asks that a successor may be appointed at as early a date as the Trustees can fix upon a suitable person.

Finally, we would invite the members of the Corporation to visit the establishment in all its parts, and make a thorough examination of it. To them, and to the special notice and care of the legislature and of the public, we would recommend the interests of the idiots and the management and support of the School. Much as has already been effected, a great deal yet remains to be done before the institution attains its highest point of usefulness.

All of which is respectfully submitted by

SAMUEL G. HOWE,
EMORY WASHBURN,
EDWARD JARVIS,
SAMUEL A. GREEN,
W. BRANDT STORER,
SAMUEL ELIOT,
LEWIS ALLEN,
HENRY G. DENNY,
LEVI HOWARD,
CHAS. H. WATERS,
J. S. DAMRELL,
EDWIN MORTON,

Trustees.

Boston, Oct. 7, 1875.

Boston, Oct. 7, 1875.

At the annual meeting of the Corporation, held this day at the institution, the foregoing was adopted and ordered to be printed, and the officers for the ensuing year were elected.

W. BRANDT STORER,

Secretary pro tem.

OFFICERS FOR 1875-76.

President.

SAMUEL G. HOWE.

Vice-President.

EMORY WASHBURN.

Treasurer.

FREDERICK W. G. MAY.

Secretary.

EDWARD JARVIS.

Trustees.

SAMUEL G. HOWE.

LEWIS ALLEN.

EMORY WASHBURN.

HENRY G. DENNY.

EDWARD JARVIS.

LEVI HOWARD.

SAMUEL A. GREEN.

CHARLES H. WATERS.

W. BRANDT STORER.

J. S. DAMRELL.

SAMUEL ELIOT.

EDWIN MORTON.

Visiting Committee.

For January,	Messrs. ALLEN and WATERS.
February,	WATERS and DAMRELL.
March,	DAMRELL and WASHBURN.
April,	WASHBURN and DENNY.
May,	DENNY and STORER.
June,	STORER and ELIOT.
July,	ELIOT and MORTON.
August,	MORTON and GREEN.
September,	GREEN and JARVIS.
October,	JARVIS and HOWARD.
November,	HOWARD and HOWE.
December,	HOWE and ALLEN.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

To the Trustees.

GENTLEMEN:—It had been my intention, in resigning my office as General Superintendent of this institution, to give a full account of the origin and progress of the first attempts made in Europe and in this country in behalf of idiotic children; to describe the systems and methods employed in their instruction and training; and to put on record some thoughts and theories on the subject, drawn from personal observation and study during thirty-five years.

The condition of my health, however, will not admit of my carrying out this intention in all its details. I have been for several months too unwell to be able to search books, compare statistics, and arrange facts, and have not had sufficient physical strength to work out my ideas. I must therefore confine this Report to a few remarks upon idiocy, and the classification of idiots, and to an historical sketch of what has been done in Massachusetts for the improvement of their condition, and for the establishment of a school for their instruction and training. This sketch is based upon various of my former publications on the subject, as well as upon public documents, and is accompanied by a brief statement of

some of the results of the system of instruction and training pursued in our School.

DEFINITION AND KINDS OF IDIOCY.

The terms idiocy and idiot have been variously defined, but seldom in a clear or precise manner. Most writers on the subject, treating it from a special point of view, medical or legal or metaphysical, as the case might be, have started from different premises, and arrived at different conclusions. It is therefore difficult to find two whose definitions entirely agree. The one sketched out by me, without pretending to any special scientific accuracy, ran as follows:—

Idiocy is the condition of a human being in which, owing to some morbid cause in the bodily organization, the faculties and sentiments remain dormant or undeveloped, so that the person is incapable of self-guidance, and of approaching that degree of knowledge usual with others of his age.

This condition extends through various grades, from the simpleton, who cannot be taught the rudiments of knowledge as other children are, down to the drivelling idiot, who can neither learn to speak, to walk, or even to retain the saliva in his mouth.

The imperfect development of the intellectual powers may be owing to various causes,—to organic imperfection in the structure of the brain, as the want of certain organs; to functional imperfections, producing inharmonious action among those organs; or to deranged functional activity, giving rise to great

inequality of development, average good sense being manifested under certain conditions, childishness under others.

If there is organic imperfection in the structure of the brain, very little of harmonious development, or, in other words, harmony of character, can be obtained by any mode of training; but, if the imperfection is a functional one, a great amount of improvement is possible.

It is a matter of great importance that those to whom the care of feeble-minded children is intrusted, should understand thoroughly the distinction between *organic* and *functional* defects in the brain. If certain fingers of a man's hand are wanting, he cannot be taught to play the flute. If they exist, but are clumsy from neglect, or palsied by disease, training may bring out their functional activity. The case is the same with the cerebral organs. The treatment of the brain is, however, a very difficult and delicate task. We sometimes want to bring one of its organs into action, and at the same time to repress undue activity in another. Great tact and discrimination are here required, lest we confound one organ with another, and thus do more harm than good.

Besides this distinction, it is also very important that the brain, its organs, and its functions, should not be confounded with the soul, its faculties and its attributes. Let us use an illustration. A musical instrument has keys and strings; and if these are perfect and in order, it will discourse sweet music to the touch of the musician; but if they are deficient and out of order, it cannot be made to do so. A man has

a brain and a set of cerebral organs. If these organs are found to exist in due number and proportion, and are all in good order, the combined action resulting from their character will be harmonious. If they are not, then it will not. Now, the brain and its organs do not constitute the soul, any more than the keys and strings constitute the musician. The soul—the incomprehensible man—sits behind the brain, and plays upon it, as the musician plays upon the instrument.

People of uncultivated minds are very apt to mistake a function of the brain for a faculty of the soul, and an error of this kind may render all efforts to train and educate an idiotic person futile and unsuccessful.

CLASSIFICATION OF IDIOTS.

There is as great a variety in the modes of classifying idiots as there is in the definitions of the term idiocy; and, as is very natural, these various modes of classification conflict with and often contradict each other.

Having paid considerable attention to the subject of imperfect mental development, it has been my custom to divide persons of imperfect cerebral organization into three classes; viz., idiots, fools, and simpletons.

It is often very difficult to classify people of defective intellect correctly, even under this general arrangement, or to say that such an one is an idiot rather than a fool, or, such an other only a person of unequally developed intellect, instead of a simpleton. The best, though not the only test of the amount of

intellect possessed by a feeble-minded person, is the degree of perfection in which he possesses the faculty of language. If a boy at ten or twelve years of age (or even six or eight) *hears*, and does not speak, it is *prima facie* evidence that his intellect is in an undeveloped state. It furnishes a strong probability of *idiocy*.

If he can merely use nouns,—the names of things,—he is probably *foolish*.

If he can construct and understand simple sentences, but cannot use or apprehend involved and complicated ones, he is merely a *simpleton*.

The ability to use polysyllables would not raise him above the second grade. In using the name of a person or thing, the number of syllables does not add much to the complexity of thought or difficulty of utterance.

A better test is the substitution of pronouns for nouns. A little child, or a fool, would say, for instance, "Willie want water," while a simpleton would say, "*I* want water."

A simpleton can hardly make a complicated sentence, such as the following: "Should it be fair to-morrow, and my father consent, I will either come to see you, or send my brother." The use of the conjunction disjunctive is always difficult for persons of feeble mental organization.

It must be understood, however, that in speaking of the use of language as a test of intellect, I do not include the tendency to loquacity. Many people are garrulous; and weak-minded persons are apt to be so, and will rattle away upon their small stock of words,

making much sound, without perhaps possessing the ability even to understand an involved sentence, much less to construct one.

“It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”—*Shakespeare*.

OTHER DATA BY WHICH TO TEST IDIOCY.

But, although language forms, as has been stated, an important clue in ascertaining the actual amount of mental capacity possessed by a feeble-minded person, it is not in itself an all-sufficient test. Several other data are also required. The sense of music, and the perception of form, color, weight, and dimensions, are very important aids in determining the degree of mental capacity possessed by a simpleton or an idiotic person. We must know whether he is gluttonous or moderate in his eating, clean or dirty in his habits, etc., etc.; whether he possesses any powers of reasoning and comparison, however rudimentary; whether he is naturally mirthful or sad, communicative or secretive, liberal or hoarding, firm or yielding, affectionate and dependent upon others, or self-reliant, etc., etc. We must also take cognizance of his physical peculiarities; of the shape and size of his head, his height, weight, depth of chest, and degree of adipose; of the color of his eyes, and quality of his hair, etc., etc. In short, we must have a good idea of his general temperament.

From this and similar data we can conclude whether the brain of a feeble-minded person is pretty equally developed in the occipital region or not, and

this will help us to form a correct idea as to whether or not his moral faculties are capable of high cultivation, and to what degree his powers of intellect can be developed.

Such are a few of the many reflections which might be made on the subject of idiocy, and the classification of idiots. Let me now give an account of what has been done in our State for the amelioration of the degraded condition of this class of children.

FIRST ATTEMPTS TO TRAIN IDIOTS IN MASSACHUSETTS.

As early as the year 1839 an idiotic blind child was received at the Institution for the Blind. He was not only unsound in mind, but infirm in body. He was unable to walk, and nearly paralytic. I had had no previous experience whatever in training this class of defective children, and no precise knowledge of what had been done for the amelioration of their condition elsewhere, or of what could be done for this end. I decided, however, to retain and try to improve him.

Guided by the idea that the first and most important object in a system of instruction is to develop and improve the body and put it into the best possible condition for the development of the mental faculties, I put the child under such a course of treatment as the rules of physiology and hygiene had suggested to me. This was persisted in, and after some time he was found to be greatly improved in every respect. Indeed, his condition was so far ameliorated as to make me feel that even the poor idiot was not beyond

the saving reach of the divine laws which promise improvement as the sure return of every kind of cultivation.

Two other similar cases of children, blind and idiotic, were afterwards treated at the same establishment with considerable success.

The favorable results met with in training these children, led me to infer that, if so much could be done for idiots who were blind, still more could be accomplished for those who had sight. My sympathy for them grew stronger and stronger every day, and my energies were enlisted in their cause. The amelioration of their condition became the object of my studies, and I was convinced, beyond doubt, that idiots were capable of being improved in their bodily habits, in their mental capacities, and even in their spiritual natures. I consulted with some of my friends on the subject, and it was considered an imperative duty to try to do something for the instruction and training of this class of unfortunate children. Many public-spirited and philanthropic gentlemen became interested in the matter, and various plans and methods were proposed for bringing it about. Such, however, was the incredulity of the public mind in regard to the capacity of ordinary idiots for improvement, that it was thought best to proceed very carefully, and to obtain accurate official information in the first place as to the number and condition of these unfortunate persons in the Commonwealth. This, it was thought, might be accomplished, though perhaps with some difficulty; while the idea of establishing a school for idiots would

have been rejected and ridiculed by the community at large as an illusion of visionary and unpractical minds.

First Committee on Idiocy.

After many private deliberations in the winter of 1845, it was resolved to make a public movement, and Judge Byington, then a member of the House of Representatives, moved an Order on the 22d of January, 1846, for the appointment of a committee to consider the expediency of appointing commissioners to inquire into the condition of idiots in this Commonwealth, to ascertain their number, and whether anything could be done for their relief, and to report on the subject to the next general court. This Order was unanimously passed in the House of Representatives, and printed immediately.

The committee thus appointed consisted of Messrs. Byington of Stockbridge, Clark of Boston, Burbank of Lexington, Upham of Malden, and Perry of Dover.

These gentlemen did their work promptly and faithfully.

About this time a committee was appointed upon the same subject in the New York Senate; and, by a curious coincidence, both these committees, each acting quite independently of the other, and probably ignorant of the other's existence, made their respective reports on the twenty-fifth day of March.

The plan proposed by the New York committee provided for the immediate establishment of an asylum; but this was not adopted by the legislature, and was entirely abandoned when its

author, and ardent friend and advocate, Dr. Backus, left the Senate.

The plan of the Massachusetts committee was simply to institute careful preliminary inquiries. The report of the committee, recommending the adoption of a Resolve for the appointment by the governor of three commissioners on idiocy, was concise and to the point. It was accompanied by a letter from me, dated March 12, 1846, which concluded with saying that "considerations of duty, humanity, and economy, all demanded that the condition of the idiots at public charge should be inquired into, with a view to its speedy improvement." The Resolve was unanimously adopted.

Appointment of Commissioners.

Under the authority of the above Resolve, Gov. Briggs appointed a commission, of which I was chairman, and Messrs. Horatio Byington and Gilman Kimball were members.

As soon as we had accepted the task assigned to us, we set to work to organize a plan for carrying it out systematically and successfully.

We first addressed circular letters to the town and city clerks and other persons in every town of the Commonwealth, and endeavored to ascertain, by this means, the number and, as far as was possible, the condition of the idiots in their respective neighborhoods; but we soon found that little dependence could be placed upon information so obtained, and decided to visit in person as many towns as we could, and to gather the desired inform-

ation by personal inquiry and observation. Some of the facts which we obtained in this manner were of an encouraging character. The welfare of the idiots was found to depend, in a very great degree, upon the intelligence of those who had charge of them. When under the care of ignorant people, they were in a degraded and disgusting condition, little above the level of the brutes; but under more favorable influences, better symptoms were manifested. This gave rise to the hope that, under kind and enlightened treatment, these unfortunate children might unfold capacities, both mental and physical, which, in their undeveloped state, seemed all but impossible.

Information was obtained from France, Switzerland, and Prussia, with regard to the treatment of idiots, and the success met with in schools established for their training in those countries, and steps were taken to extend our inquiries in every direction. Our researches were begun too late in the season, however, to enable us to report during the session of the legislature.

Reports of the Commissioners.

We concluded, under the circumstances, to present a brief report in the winter of 1847, accompanied by a valuable letter from my friend, George Sumner, then resident at Paris, giving a full and detailed account of the school for imbeciles established there,* and to request permission to pursue our labors during the next season.

* See Appendix A.

This petition having been granted by the legislature, I visited many towns in person, and examined a great number of idiots. A competent and trustworthy agent, Mr. E. Stevens, was also employed for the same purpose. At the session of the year 1848, I laid before the legislature the result of my labors in a complete report. This was published in a pamphlet of one hundred pages, with an appendix of tables extending through forty-eight pages more, and contained an account of a thorough investigation into the nature, causes, and various forms of idiocy, and a full statement of the condition and treatment of idiots in almshouses and private families in Massachusetts. It also gave information concerning what had been done in some of the best European schools established for children of this class. The tables appended to this report gave an account of the mental and physical condition, and (so far as they could be ascertained) of the hereditary tendencies of five hundred and seventy-four idiots, and various measurements of the height, size of head and chest, conditions of body and manifestations of mind of these persons, compared with the average, in these particulars, of one thousand ordinary persons.

Establishment of the Experimental School.

This report led to a series of Resolves by the legislature, entitled "Resolves concerning Training and Teaching Idiots," which were approved May 8, 1848, and by which a sum not exceeding \$2,500 annually, for the term of three years, was appropriated for the purpose of training and teaching ten idiotic children,

to be selected from those at public charge, or from the families of indigent persons in different parts of the Commonwealth, "provided that an arrangement can be made by the governor and council with any suitable institution, now patronized by the Commonwealth for charitable purposes."

Agreeably to the spirit of these resolutions, arrangements were made by the governor with the trustees of the Perkins Institution for the Blind to assume the responsibility for the proper expenditure of the money appropriated by the State, and the care of carrying the experiment out was intrusted to me.

A competent teacher, Mr. J. B. Richards, was engaged, and sent to Europe, to learn by personal observation the methods of instruction pursued in the new school at Paris; and preparations were made during the summer of 1848 to begin work as soon as it should be practicable. Mr. Richards returned in the autumn, and the school was organized and went into operation on the 1st of October, 1848, with ten state beneficiaries, and three private pupils. It was opened, and the household organized, within the walls of the Perkins Institution for the Blind, and remained there for nearly two years. The Eighteenth Report of the Trustees of the above institution to the corporation, written on the 1st of January, 1850, contained the following account of the arrangement:—

"By an Act of the legislature of Massachusetts, passed April, 1848, it was provided that a sum of money should be appropriated yearly from the state treasury during three years, for the purpose of trying the experiment of training

and teaching idiotic children, provided that any of the charitable institutions under the patronage of the State would undertake to conduct the experiment. The object was one of public charity. It was an attempt to carry out the humane idea of making the State provide means of nurture and instruction for every class of its unfortunate children. It was kindred in spirit to that upon which this institution is conducted. We therefore most willingly consented that any aid which the establishment could afford, without detriment to the blind, should be given to the new plan.

"It was well understood, moreover, that the movement had been made in consequence of the exertions of Dr. Howe, and that he would have the direction of the experiment. The trustees became responsible to the State for the expenditure of the money upon the experiment, without, however, really incurring any risk of loss to the institution, because Dr. Howe became personally responsible for any excess of cost over the receipts. All moneys received were to be paid into our treasury, and all bills were audited and passed regularly through the books.

"The new school was opened, and the household organized, within the walls of the institution, but entirely apart, in the wing appropriated for the director's family, but voluntarily relinquished by him. It is now removed to a house in the immediate neighborhood, and we are happy to be able to say that it gives good promise of success. It is probably the kernel from which will spring up a goodly establishment, that shall give nurture and instruction to a large class of children, compared with whom, the blind and even the deaf-mutes are fortunate and highly favored beings."

The progress of the new enterprise attracted the notice of the press and the attention of the public. Many who had regarded the project of instructing idiots as in the highest degree visionary and unpractical, now became its advocates. Mr. George B. Emerson, one of the most competent judges in matters pertaining to education, published in the

"Christian Examiner" for January, 1851, an able review of the reports on idiocy, with copious extracts therefrom, which was afterwards circulated in a separate pamphlet. Dr. Edward Jarvis, of Dorchester, whose hearty coöperation had been enlisted in the enterprise from the date of its commencement, also published a minute analysis of these documents in the "American Journal of the Medical Sciences," which is copied and hereto appended.*

The supplement to the report on idiocy, published in 1848, was reprinted in Edinburgh, Scotland, in a separate pamphlet entitled "On the Causes of Idiocy," and circulated by the trustees of the late William Ramsey Henderson, Esq. This pamphlet contained extracts from other reports as well, and was accompanied by a brief introduction, the close of which ran as follows:—

"The present volume has been printed at the expense of the trustees of the late William Ramsey Henderson, Esq., younger, of Eildon Hall and Warriston, who, in his settlement, directed them to apply the residue of his property 'in whatever manner they might judge best for the advancement and diffusion of the science of phrenology, and the practical application thereof in particular.' The trustees are of opinion that the facts disclosed in this report illustrate, in an impressive manner, the influence of the condition of the brain on the mental manifestations, and show the necessity of instructing all classes of the people in the functions of that organ, and in the circumstances which promote and impede its healthy development and activity, on which so much of human happiness depends. It appears to them that such lessons as this report affords are well calculated to rouse attention to the great expediency of introducing physiology

* See Appendix B.

and the laws of health as a branch of general education into schools; and it is by this belief, as well as by the hope of promoting the improved treatment of our idiots, and helping to diminish the number of such unhappy persons in future, that they have been induced to undertake the present publication."

Permanent Establishment of the School, and its Influences.

The experiment of instructing idiots proved so successful, that at the end of two years the legislature doubled the appropriation, and made provision for converting the Experimental School into a permanent one. The usefulness of the establishment became widely known, and the friends of the cause elsewhere were greatly encouraged.

Gov. Hunt, of New York, interested himself in the matter of training idiots, and I entered into correspondence with him on the subject. This correspondence led to an exhibition of some of the pupils of the Massachusetts School in the capitol, at Albany, before the state authorities and many members of the legislature. The exhibition was conducted by myself and Mr. J. B. Richards, the teacher, and excited great interest. I made an address, and earnestly urged the establishment of a school in New York similar to the one so successfully in operation in Massachusetts.

The long-abandoned attempt to establish a state asylum there was renewed, and one was very soon organized at Albany, and put under the charge of a citizen of Massachusetts, Dr. H. B. Wilbur.

The following extract from a letter written to me

by Gov. Hunt, and dated "Executive Department, Albany, July 22, 1851," is an interesting historic document, and shows the effect of the above-mentioned exhibition:—

"Your visit to our capitol, last winter, was of great service. We feel that we are much indebted to you for the success of the measure thus far, and hope we may have the benefit of your experience and counsel in carrying our plan into practical operation. . . . You must remember that we are new beginners in the good work, and until we have had some experience of our own, we must look to the *East* for light and information."

Hon. Christopher Morgan, then secretary of the board of education, also wrote to me as follows on the same subject:—

ALBANY, March 23, 1852.

DEAR SIR:—I remember, with great satisfaction, your visit to Albany, with the idiotic pupils under your charge. Previous to your visit, I had regarded the institutions for the instruction of idiots rather as asylums for the improvement of the physical condition of the idiots, than for educational purposes.

A very attentive examination of your pupils convinced me that their physical defects might be in a great measure remedied, and their minds cultivated and enlarged to an extent far beyond anything I had imagined.

The exhibition before the legislature was eminently satisfactory and convincing.

Dr. Backus, recently a state senator, and an enlightened and philanthropic citizen of Rochester, labored with zeal and fidelity, though unsuccessfully, to establish an institution for idiots in this State. Very soon after your visit to Albany, a law was passed for the establishment of an institution for idiots; an appropriation of six thousand dollars a year, for two years, was made, and the institution is now in successful

operation in the vicinity of the city, under the judicious management of Dr. Wilbur.

It may now be regarded as permanently established, and to your visit, more than anything else, are we indebted for this noble charity, so creditable to the liberality and benevolence of the State.

Very respectfully and truly yours,

CHRISTOPHER MORGAN.

To the SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SCHOOL FOR IDIOTIC CHILDREN, }
Boston, Mass. }

The school at Albany was so successful, that the State made generous provision for putting the institution on a firm basis, and it was transferred to a large and commodious building at Syracuse.

The impulse thus given did not stop here. Schools for training and teaching idiotic children were established in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois.

Such are some of the general effects of the establishment and existence of our institution.

Present Location of the School.

The work of the school was carried on in uncomfortable and narrow quarters until the year 1855. It then became apparent that measures should be at once taken for procuring a site and building or buildings for the institution, and it was resolved to seek aid from the State. A committee, therefore, appointed by the Trustees and Corporation, brought the subject before the legislature, and warmly urged its being taken into consideration. A large majority of both the Senate and the House visited the School at South Boston, and expressed themselves satisfied with its

purposes and workings. After a careful examination of the whole subject, the legislature granted the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, on condition that the friends of the institution should raise and contribute the sum of five thousand dollars more, for the purpose of finishing the building. The Trustees appointed a committee, consisting of Messrs. Samuel Hoar, William Minot, and myself, to raise the money required by the condition of the Act, and we succeeded in doing so within the time specified.

As the means were obtained, a committee appointed by the Trustees took the matter in hand, and at first sought for some building which had been already erected for other purposes, and which, not being used or wanted, might be obtained for a lower sum than its original cost; but being unable to succeed in this plan, we purchased the site upon which the School now stands, and made arrangements for erecting a building, which was ready for occupancy early in October, 1856.

The situation is one of the pleasantest and most salubrious within the city limits, and in every way adapted to the purposes for which it was selected.

The grounds have been extended by purchase within the past year, and now form a complete square, bounded by wide public avenues, and with a fine view of the sea, and a good southern exposure.

Such is in brief the history of the foundation of the School for Idiots. As has been repeatedly said in former reports, it had its origin in that feeling of respect for humanity which is pained by the thought that any who bear its impress, however low in the

scale, or however deformed or infirm they may be, should be left out of the common bond of brotherly love, and outcast from the common family.

This feeling lies deep in the hearts of the people of Massachusetts, and has never been appealed to in vain, whether in behalf of the insane, the deaf, the blind, or the infirm of any class; and it led the legislature promptly to include the idiot within the circle of the State's bounties, when asked to do so.

There was no question about cost and return. There was no hesitation arising from the prevailing belief that idiots must always remain idiots. There they stood, their infirmity their only claim; but that claim was admitted instantly, and all the more readily because of their own inability to urge it. Be their chance of improvement greater or less, still they were human, and, as such, entitled to every possible opportunity and aid for developing to the utmost their capacity for knowledge, virtue, and happiness.

RESULTS OF THE TRAINING AND TEACHING OF IDIOTS.

The improvement effected in the appearance of idiotic children trained in our School can be promptly seen by any intelligent observer; but the moral results obtained from the workings of the establishment cannot be easily estimated and made clear to the common understanding. If, however, there were a measure to mete the value of improved bodily health, of gross animal appetites reduced to human moderation, vicious and debasing practices broken up, and filthy habits exchanged for cleanly ones; if there

were a currency to represent the price of intellect dawning out of the night of darkness, and moral affections born out of a chaos of selfish desires; above all, if there were a standard by which to show the value of the happiness to parents, teachers, and friends, in beholding the progress of our unfortunate pupils, and the moral advantage of a triumph over seemingly insuperable difficulties in the way of human improvement,—if measures and standards such as these existed, so that the profit might be set forth in numbers, it would be found to far exceed the cost in money that has been incurred.

It may not be out of place here to repeat a brief description, given twenty-three years ago, of the lamentable condition of idiots in this country, before any measures were taken for their improvement, and by comparing it with the present, to show forth the efficacy of the modes and methods of instruction and training pursued in this and several other kindred institutions.

PAST AND PRESENT CONDITION OF IDIOTS.

When the first steps were taken in this matter by the legislature of Massachusetts, in 1846, it was the common belief—indeed, it may be said, with very rare exceptions, to have been the universal belief—in this country, that the training of idiots was a matter beyond the skill of the most zealous educator, and almost beyond the reach of human sympathy. Public opinion, as expressed by the law, was more favorable to the parents and heirs of idiotic persons, but not to idiots themselves, than it was in the mother-land in

the fourteenth century, when the king had the custody of their lands during their life, and disposed of their property after death as seemed to him best, for his own pleasure, and for "the good of their souls." Our own law considered them as paupers, but classed them with rogues and vagabonds, for it provided that they should be kept within the precincts of the houses of correction.

The most melancholy feature of the whole was their condemnation as worthless and incapable of improvement, the law requiring their removal from the only place where they were comfortable—the State Lunatic Asylum—whenever it was necessary to make room for the less unfortunate insane, and sending them, not to another asylum, but to the house of correction. There was not upon this whole continent any systematic attempt to lift them up out of their brutish condition. Even in Massachusetts, where the maniac is made to go clad and kept in a state of comparative quiet,—where the blind are taught to read, the mute to speak, yea, and even the blind-mute to do both,—even here the poor idiot was left to that deterioration which so certainly follows neglect. He had but little talent given him, and, by neglect or abuse, that little was lost, until, growing more and more brutish, he sank, unregretting and unregretted, into an early grave, without ever having been counted as a man. His existence was comfortless to him, and taught to others no lessons but those of sadness and despair.

Such, in short, was the condition of idiots thirty years ago in this country, and all efforts for its

amelioration were regarded as visionary and unpractical. Now, on the other hand, there is a general conviction that the great law of educability extends even over this class of children, and that their claim to special instruction and training is urged alike by justice, public morality, and Christian benevolence. This conviction is so well founded, that, besides this School, there are nine others of the same kind in different parts of the country, supported mostly by funds raised from general taxation, and all efforts for increasing the number of such schools are earnestly encouraged. There are to-day over eleven hundred feeble-minded children, who are receiving instruction in these institutions, and the work of training them is carried on by a number of able and cultivated persons, who have not only become interested in the improvement of their pupils, but labor zealously for the elevation of idiots as a class.

Among the establishments which have brought about this happy result, our School has been a leading and very important one. It started from a humble beginning, and had to make every step in the path of progress by fighting against incredulity and prejudice as to the capacity of idiots; but it grew steadily from year to year in importance and usefulness. True, it has not changed the nature of any born idiot, or given him common-sense, and no person of common honesty or wisdom has ever pretended that this could be done; but it has accomplished a vast amount of good in various ways. It has shown that idiots form no exception to the law, that every form of organized life is capable of being changed for better or worse by

surrounding influences. It has rescued many children of merely feeble minds from the imbecility into which they had fallen through abuse or neglect or injudicious treatment,—children who were considered as idiots, and who would have sunk into hopeless idiocy, but for the help afforded at this School. It has given speech to some who were dumb, and who, if left without special aid and training, would have remained so. Finally, more than three-fifths of the five hundred and forty-eight idiotic youth who have been enrolled as pupils of our School, have been improved either physically, morally, or intellectually, by their stay in the establishment. They have been put into a higher state of health and vigor. They have been trained to the command and use of muscle and limb. They feed themselves, dress themselves, and conduct themselves with decency and decorum. Their gluttonous and unseemly habits have been broken up. They have been trained to temperance, cleanliness, and order, until these habits have become with them a second nature. Their powers of self-control have been strengthened, and they strive to make themselves less unsightly and disagreeable to others. Many of the pupils have been trained to habits of industry, so that they may at least be less burdensome to their friends and neighbors, or to the townships or communities by which they are supported. Their mental faculties and moral sentiments have been developed by lessons and exercises suitable to their feeble condition, and they have been raised in the scale of humanity.

With all these encouraging facts before them, let

the friends of the institution push forward until it reaches its highest degree of usefulness. Let them learn, amid difficulties, to hope ever, and to despair never. Let them labor to convince the public at large, by practical illustration, if need be, how great is the capacity of idiots, if taken young and properly trained, for improvement in their bodily condition, in their habits, manners, minds, and morals, and how few are the exceptions to this rule; and lastly, let them strengthen, in the public mind, the faith that the love and wisdom of our Heavenly Father are manifest, not only in those gifted ones who seem fashioned most nearly in his likeness, but may be traced even in these broken fragments of humanity, which should therefore be carefully gathered up, that nothing be lost which his sanctifying fingers have touched.

CONCLUSION.

I feel a certain degree of diffidence in submitting this Report. I have long cherished the hope, that in tendering the resignation of my official relations with the School, I should be able to close the series of reports, begun twenty-nine years ago, with a full account of what has been done, what ought still to be done, and what can be done for idiots. The strength has failed me to complete this purpose as fully as I might wish. I beg your indulgence, however, for a brief statement of my relations with the establishment, and if any apology on the score of modesty be needed for giving it, let it be remembered that erroneous impressions may sometimes arise from ignorance of facts, and that these should, if possible, be dispelled.

The existence of the School was owing to my efforts, more than to those of any and all other persons. For several years I worked almost alone (aided by my friend, Dr. Jarvis), and gave a large part of my time to the service of the institution, where I was in daily attendance, examined all candidates for admission, engaged all its officers, etc. I prescribed the diet and regimen, the rules and regulations of the establishment, the discipline and exercises in the school and gymnasium, and made all the examinations in person. I kept the correspondence, and ordered all expenses. I also travelled a good deal in search of pupils. I visited other States, and brought before their legislatures the plan of having their idiotic children sent to our School, proper payment therefor being provided. I incurred considerable expense in all this, without remuneration; and it was not until about seven years ago that I consented to receive a nominal allowance for my traveling and personal expenses. I spared no efforts to have the institution included within the circle of state charities, and labored in season and out of season to bring it up to its present condition of usefulness.

But now my term is drawing toward its close. The condition of my health, aggravated by the infirmities of old age, compels me to seek rest; and I pray that you will relieve me of further care and anxiety in regard to the School.

Respectfully submitted by

SAM'L G. HOWE.

DR. MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR IDIOTIC AND FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH, in account with F. W. G. MAY, Treasurer. CR.

1875.		1874.	
Sept. 30,	For borrowed money repaid at sundry dates, interest paid, investment and reinvestment of funds, Auditor's warrants paid at sundry dates, rent of safe, stationery and stamps, . purchase of adjoining land, services searching title, balance to new account,	\$7,500 00 86 58 1,516 61 25,315 80 12 00 4,100 00 40 00 881 53	Oct. 1, 1875. Sept. 30,
			By balance from former account, By payments from State Treasury, payments on account extra appropri'n, receipts for board and education from sundry persons, sales of sundries, money borrowed at sundry times, change of investment, income of funds,
		\$39,452 52	\$663 59 17,500 00 3,750 00 4,479 75 42 57 11,500 00 1,000 00 516 61 \$39,452 52
And there is due for borrowed money,		\$4,000 00	Oct. 1, 1875. By balance brought down,
			\$881 53

The present value of investments is,—“Stephen Fairbanks Legacy,” \$771.42; “Henry Harris Fund,” \$7,586.41; “Miss Josephine May’s Gift,” \$710.53; “In memoriam Nath’l Redman Fund,” \$1,190; total, \$10,258.36.

Boston, Oct. 4, 1875.

E. & O. E.

FRED. W. G. MAY, Treasurer.

Boston, Oct. —, 1875. Having examined the above account, we find the same correctly cast and properly vouched.

LEWIS ALLEN,
W. BRANDT STORER,
Auditors.

*Analysis of Expenditures for the Year ending September 30, 1875,
as per Steward's account.*

Meat, 19,133 pounds,	\$2,566 76	
Fish, 2,160 pounds,	139 27	
Butter, 2,103 pounds,	748 21	
Rice, sago, etc., 566 pounds,	77 94	
Bread, flour, meal, etc.,	1,754 28	
Potatoes and other vegetables,	485 00	
Fruit,	202 56	
Milk, 3,003 quarts,	256 88	
Sugar, 2,875 pounds,	295 71	
Tea and coffee, 341 pounds,	164 21	
Sundry groceries,	176 82	
Gas and oil,	254 15	
Coal and wood,	1,650 67	
Sundry articles of consumption,	436 89	
Furniture and bedding,	896 98	
Clothing and mending,	157 08	
Superintendence and instruction,	2,796 09	
Domestic service,	3,682 40	
Outside aid,	319 75	
Expenses of boys' shop,	68 83	
Expenses of stable,	1,151 45	
Books and stationery,	301 44	
Medicines and medical aid,	131 38	
Taxes and insurance,	282 50	
Travelling and other expenses of Superintendent,	500 00	
Musical instruments,	89 00	
Ordinary construction repairs,	1,316 36	
Sundries,	143 84	
		\$21,046 45
Extraordinary construction and repairs,	\$2,033 39	
Bills to be refunded,	492 54	
		2,525 93
Total,	\$23,572 38

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

[A.]

I have had great difficulty in obtaining most of the documents to which reference is made in the foregoing report. Some of them are entirely out of print, and others can only be found scattered through a number of large volumes. As these documents are the only source from which the materials for a history of the origin and progress of the instruction and training of idiots in Massachusetts can be drawn, it is thought well to append them herewith in chronological order.

S. G. H.

[House—No. 72.]

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Jan. 22, 1846.

Ordered, That Messrs. Byington of Stockbridge, Clark of Boston, Burbank of Lexington, Upham of Malden, and Perry of Dover, be a committee to consider the expediency of appointing commissioners to inquire into the condition of the idiots in this Commonwealth, to ascertain their number, and whether anything can be done for their relief, and to report to the next general court.

C. W. STOREY, *Clerk*.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 25, 1846.

The committee instructed to consider the expediency of appointing commissioners to inquire into the condition of the idiots in this Commonwealth, to ascertain their number, and whether anything can be done for their improvement, now ask leave to report,—

That there is no adequate provision by law for the relief, care, and treatment of the idiots in the Commonwealth. The state lunatic

asylum is designed for such lunatics as are furiously mad, and who would be dangerous to the public, if suffered to go at large. It is designed, also, as an institution for the cure and improvement of the insane. As idiots are not considered susceptible of improvement, the law requires their removal from the asylum to the houses of correction, when necessary, to make room for those who can be improved.

By a statute passed in 1836, chapter 223, idiots and lunatics, not furiously mad, may be confined in an apartment in houses of correction by an order of two justices of the peace. And a subsequent statute gives a right of trial by jury of the question of idiocy or lunacy, instead of leaving it to the decision of the justices.

By a statute passed in 1839, chapter 131, the city of Boston is authorized to erect a hospital for the reception and treatment of the same class of persons.

By another statute, passed in 1842, chapter 100, county commissioners are authorized to provide a separate building for idiots and the insane, not furiously mad, without the precincts of the house of correction, but subject to the same government as the house of correction. The committee are not aware of any other legal provisions upon this subject.

By the Pauper Abstract for 1845, it appears that 385 idiots were relieved or supported by the State during that year. In the census taken in 1840, the idiots and lunatics are classed together, and were 1,271, of whom 773 were a public charge.

The law provides for idiots as for paupers, and makes them liable to imprisonment. Will Massachusetts do no more for them? She has ever shown a desire to advance her people in civilization; she has exerted her beneficial power for various classes of unhappy persons, whose misfortunes private charity could not relieve. There is still another class of sufferers, for whom no adequate provision has been made; viz., the idiots in the Commonwealth. They are her children; they are beings who have the form of humanity; who endure many of its severest miseries, and enjoy none of its blessings. The emotions of hope, of joy, never exist in them; the sweet voice of sympathy never gladdens their hearts. Their condition is inferior to that of the common beggar, for they know not what they want; nor have they power to ask relief. Those who are endowed with capacities for great enjoyment, who have the means of doing much good, may well make the inquiry, whether they can improve their physical and moral condition. So much has been done for the improvement of the deaf and dumb, the blind and the insane, that we may be encouraged to hope, and stimulated to make a trial, for the improvement of every being who has the form of humanity.

Every one knows how much has been done to improve the condition of the insane within a very few years. What a complete revolution has been wrought in the public mind on this subject! All this change has been produced by the substitution of knowledge and kindness for ignorance, neglect, and brutality.

One is now astonished to learn that, until a recent period, within a few years, the following law was in force in Massachusetts :—

“AN ACT in addition to an Act entitled An Act for suppressing rogues, vagabonds, common beggars, and other idle, disorderly, and lewd persons.

“SECT. 3. *Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid :* That when it shall be made to appear to any two justices, *quorum unus*, that any person, being within their county, is lunatic, and so furiously mad as to render it dangerous to the peace or the safety of the *good people* for such lunatic person to go at large, the said justices shall have full power, by warrant under their hands and seals, to commit such person to the house of correction, there to be detained *till she or he be restored to his or her right mind*, or otherwise delivered by due course of law. And every person so committed *shall be kept at his or her own expense*, if he or she have estate; otherwise, at the charge of the person or town upon whom his maintenance was regularly to be charged, if he or she had not been committed; *and he or she shall, if able, be put to work during his or her confinement.*”—[*Passed February 27, 1798.*

This can hardly be said to be an improvement upon a law passed in England in the year 1324, in the reign of Edward II., which ordains “that the king shall have the custody of the lands of natural fools, and dispose of the property of persons dying insane, for the good of their souls.”

The successful efforts which have been made for the idiots in Europe, demand of us similar efforts in their behalf. A school has been established for their instruction in one of the great hospitals in Paris. The founder of the school has been remarkably successful, not only in greatly improving their physical condition, but also in imparting valuable instruction. They have been taught to read, to write, and music. They have also been taught to perform many kinds of valuable labor, to employ their time in a way to be useful, and to relieve themselves from the languor and misery of inactivity and idleness, and those who have the care of them from constant watchfulness over them.

In other parts of Europe similar efforts have been made, and have been attended with similar success. A particular account of them cannot be given but by extending this report to too great length.

There are some children who, at an early age, seem to have feeble minds, and who, from want of proper culture, become idiotic. It is believed that many might be rescued from mental annihilation if proper care was bestowed on them. The committee is of opinion

that the inquiry proposed should be made; that commissioners should be appointed to make report of facts embraced in the order, and their opinion on those facts, to the next general court; that the commissioners be paid nothing for their services, but that their actual expenses, which it is supposed will be small, be defrayed from the treasury. It is believed that a small sum will be sufficient for the commencement of an establishment, and that the measure will be as economical to the State as it is wise and humane.

One of the happy results of our free institutions is the inducements they give to men of opulence to bestow a portion of their wealth in judicious charities, for the advancement of learning, religion, and the relief and improvement of every child of misfortune. In other countries a great object of ambition is to found families. To do this great wealth is required. In our country an inheritance is of doubtful utility; and it is a very common opinion that that young man is in a better condition with "the world wide before him," without a cent in his pocket, than he would be by being born to a great inheritance.

Great sums are almost every year bequeathed for benevolent objects. Many of these are of little use, because the donor attempts to found his own charity, and he fails to do it wisely. A wise legislature will act in reference to what will be done by individuals. It will institute all such charities as the exigencies of society require, and when it shall be perceived that they are wise and useful, they will receive the aid of private munificence.

The chairman of the committee has received two letters on the subject of this report, in answer to inquiries made by him; viz., one from Dr. Samuel B. Woodward, superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum, and one from Dr. S. G. Howe, superintendent of the Asylum for the Blind.

Dr. Woodward writes, "My opinion is that nearly all idiots can be made better; the physical condition and personal habits of the lowest order can be improved; and those possessing more mind can be trained to usefulness, and some can be taught to read, write, and labor advantageously, and be useful and happy."

The letter of Dr. Howe is annexed to this report. It is unnecessary to add that the opinions of these gentlemen will have the confidence of the House.

The committee recommend the adoption of the Resolve presented with this report.

H. BYINGTON, *Chairman.*

PERKINS INSTITUTION AND MASSACHUSETTS ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND, }
BOSTON, March 12, 1846. }

MR. BYINGTON—*Dear Sir*: You ask whether I think it is expedient to have commissioners appointed by the State to ascertain the condition and capacities of the idiots who are supported at the public charge; and I answer, that I think it to be, not only a matter of expediency, but of duty.

It is a saying with us that every child in the State has a right to be taught at the public expense; and shall we overlook or neglect those who are helpless children all their lives long?

There are about *six hundred idiotic* persons in Massachusetts, most of whom are born of poor and ignorant parents, who can do nothing for them, and they soon become the children and the charge of the public. And what do we, whom God so freely blesses with mental capacities and means of happiness,—what do we do with those helpless fellow-creatures whom he throws upon our hands? We thrust them out of sight into the almshouses; we bury their poor single talent, which he will require at *our* hands. We feed them indeed, and care for them as we do for our cattle; but, like our cattle, we let them go down to the grave without trying to kindle within them the light of reason, which may guide them on their way to eternity.

Whoever has been in the habit of visiting our almshouses, must have been struck with the pleading looks of these poor harmless beings, in whom a human soul seems struggling with the animal nature which overpowers it. They are almost always gentle and timid creatures, capable of affection, and possessed of enough of intellect to encourage any one who has the time and means for attempting their instruction to do so; but the task is so difficult a one that few ever assume it, and the almost universal lot of the idiot is to be left to bask in the sun in summer, to hang over the fire in winter, to indulge in whatever natural or unnatural appetites they may have, and to pass through life without the consciousness that they have a human soul.

This neglect of the idiots is not only a wrong to them, and a betrayal of our trust, but it is sometimes a cause of their suffering grievous ill-treatment. This is not the place to relate the sad story of some of them; nor should I be disposed to harrow up your feelings by doing so if it were. I know very well that in most of our towns the overseers of the poor, and the keepers of the almshouses, are humane people, and disposed to be kind to their helpless charge. But I know, too, that their good intentions are sometimes defeated, and that some idiots have been cruelly misused. Not only are they

often made the sport of neighboring children, and the mockery of the thoughtless inmates of the almshouse, but sometimes the victims of evil-disposed persons. Being helpless, and often unable to bear testimony against others, they have occasionally been treated with great inhumanity; idiotic males have suffered cruel oppression, and females have been shamefully outraged.

Nor is injury done to them alone; the community suffers on account of it, because the spectacle of degraded and despised humanity cannot be familiarly contemplated without harm; and every village that has an idiotic or "silly person," who is made a butt of by the young or thoughtless, suffers therefrom in its moral character. Man is made in God's image; and those who have not learned to respect humanity in every form will be wanting in due respect towards its GREAT PROTOTYPE. Besides, a wrong strikes not the injured with as much force as it recoils upon the doer of it.

If it were not certain, then, that the intellectual condition of idiots could be improved, still, for humanity's sake, it would be right to appoint commissioners to inquire into their physical condition and their actual treatment, in order to ascertain whether their unhappy lot could not be lightened. The State appoints commissioners to be the guardians of the sad and scanty relics of the Indian tribes, and to look after their rights and interests; and shall the six hundred children of our own kith and kin, who are far more helpless than the Indian,—shall they be left uncared for? The Moham-medans cherish the half-witted, and regard their incoherent words as a sort of inspiration; and shall the benighted infidels be more charitable than the Christians of Massachusetts?

But it is not only possible that many persons who are now left to vegetate as hopeless idiots, are capable of much intellectual improvement; it has now become a matter of certainty. Schools have been established for them in France and in Prussia; and in those schools the most degraded and, apparently, hopeless idiots have been much improved.

I have myself known several cases in our neighborhood of persons who had long been considered as hopeless idiots, but who, to an experienced eye, showed the marks of capacity for great improvement. Several children have been brought to me who were only insane, and, consequently, were fair subjects for treatment, but who had been always considered as idiots, and treated as such; they had been, in fact, *educated to be idiots*, for all treatment of children is education, be it for good or be it for evil.

I have in my mind one case, where the child of a rich and wise man showed such signs of idiocy as would, if he had been the son of poor and ignorant parents, certainly have condemned him to the

almshouse, to neglect, to idleness, and probably to dumbness (for he could hardly speak); but by a resolute and judicious course of instruction he has been taught to read, has been improved in speech, and will, I doubt not, become a rational man, and able to take care of himself.

Now, may it not be that there are scores and hundreds of such cases among the poor and friendless? And is it not an awful thought that our wealthy community is yearly losing human souls that were intrusted to its care, whom the mere overflowings of our garners might have gathered into the bosom of society? Will not God in his righteous judgments demand them at our hands?

But even if we descend to lower considerations, and regard the economy of the thing, we shall find that worldly wisdom would teach us to train our idiots to habits of industry. Of the 385 who are now supported at the public charge, only a few do any work, and that is of the most unprofitable kind; to say nothing of the destructive tendencies of some who are left unemployed. Now, it is certain that the great majority of them might be taught to do some simple handicraft work, that they might be trained to love labor, and thus support themselves in whole or in part.

It appears, then, that considerations of duty, humanity, and economy all demand that the condition of the idiots at public charge should be inquired into, with a view to its speedy improvement.

With great respect,

I am, dear sir, very sincerely yours,

S. G. HOWE.

Mr. BYINGTON.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty-Six.

RESOLVE for the Appointment of Commissioners on Idiocy.

Resolved, That his excellency the governor, by and with the advice and consent of the council, be authorized to appoint three persons to be commissioners to inquire into the condition of the idiots in the Commonwealth, to ascertain their number, and whether anything can be done for their relief, and make report of their doings to the next general court. The actual expenses of said commissioners shall be paid, and nothing more, and the governor is hereby authorized to draw his warrant upon the state treasury therefor.

[House—No. 152.]

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

To the House of Representatives :

I communicate for the information and use of the legislature, a "report in part," made by the commissioners appointed under the Resolve of the 11th of April, 1846, "to inquire into the condition of the idiots of the Commonwealth; to ascertain their number, and whether anything can be done for their relief." Accompanying this report, is an interesting document upon the subject of the school for idiots in Paris.

By the terms of the Resolve, the commissioners are to make their report to the present legislature. As they have not been able fully to complete their investigations, I recommend that provision be made for continuing their powers until the next session of the general court.

The report shows the expense of the commission to be inconsiderable.

GEO. N. BRIGGS.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, March 31, 1847.

BOSTON, March 15, 1847.

His Excellency GEORGE N. BRIGGS :

SIR,—The undersigned, who were appointed by your Excellency as a commission to ascertain the number and condition of the idiots in the Commonwealth, beg leave to report, in part, as follows :—

We proposed to discharge the duty confided to us,—

1st. By addressing a circular containing a list of questions to the town clerk of each town in the Commonwealth.

2d. By inspecting, personally, as many idiots as possible, in order to ascertain their condition and capacity, so as to be able to form a more just estimate of the whole.

3d. By obtaining accurate and minute information concerning the schools which have been recently and successfully established in France, Prussia, and Switzerland.

We regret to say, however, that circumstances over which we had no control, have prevented us from accomplishing fully all that we desired and undertook in either of these three ways.

Under the first head, we obtained pretty satisfactory information from 171 towns, containing an aggregate population of 345,285 inhabitants.

From these towns we have reports containing the names, age, sex,

condition, etc., of 543 idiots, 204 of whom are males, and 339 are females.

Of these, 169 are less than 25 years of age, and of course are proper subjects for instruction. Of the whole number, 106 are supported entirely at public charge.

If the other towns should present the same number, it would show an aggregate of over 1,000 idiots in this Commonwealth, of whom 300 are of proper age for instruction.

Under the second head, we obtained information, by personal inspection of the idiots, in about 30 towns, in various parts of the State, which shows that the condition of these unfortunate persons is very materially influenced by the character of those who have the charge of them.

In some towns, we found the idiots who were under the charge of kind-hearted but ignorant persons to be entirely idle, given over to disgusting and degrading habits, and presenting the sad and demoralizing spectacle of men, made in God's image, whom neither their own reason, nor the reason of others, lifted up above the level of the brutes.

In other towns, idiots, who to all appearance had no more capacity than those just mentioned, were under the charge of more intelligent persons, and they presented a different spectacle,—they were healthy, cleanly, and industrious.

We found some of a very low grade of intellect at work in the fields, under the direction of attendants; and they seem, not only to be free from depraving habits, but to be happy and useful.

The inference to be drawn from this is very important. If persons having only common-sense and common humanity, but without the advantage of experience or study, can so improve the condition of idiots, how much could be done by those who should bring the light of science, and the experience of wise and good men in other countries, and the facilities of an institution adapted to the training of idiots,—how much, we say, could be done by such persons, towards redeeming the minds of this unfortunate class from the waste and desolation in which they now lie?

Under the third head, information concerning what has been done abroad, we have not been able to receive all the documentary and other evidence for which we have applied. We have, however, received enough to give us the assurance that other countries have set an example of successful attempts to instruct and elevate the most ignorant and degraded of men, which it behooves our Commonwealth speedily to imitate.

In conclusion, we would state, that the whole expense of the commission are less than forty dollars; that we consider our labors

as only half finished ; and that, if allowed to pursue them, we think we should be able, during the coming season, to present a full and detailed report that will not be unworthy the consideration of the legislature of Massachusetts.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

For the Commission,

S. G. HOWE.

His Excellency G. N. BRIGGS.

MARCH 27, 1847.

Since the above report was written, I have received a very interesting document upon the subject of the school for idiots in Paris, from a gentleman whose name will give it authority. I beg to submit it as a part of the report.

S. G. HOWE.

PARIS, 1 February, 1847.

MY DEAR DR. HOWE,—In the report that the committee for the examination of the condition of idiots in Massachusetts, of which you are chairman, will make to the general court, I do not doubt that you will insist upon the necessity of adopting, in the State of Massachusetts, such measures as experience has shown may be successfully employed to secure the *physical* comfort and moral culture of this unfortunate class of our fellow-beings,—a class, for so long a time and in so many lands, shunned with loathing and aversion,—shut out from all social relation,—regarded as mere animals denied the holy fire of intelligence, and exposed to *physical* treatment worse than the lowest of the brute creation. It is to be hoped that your observations will show that this is not their position with us, but treatment such as I describe I have myself seen inflicted in countries laying high claims to civilization ; and, in turning from them to other lands, have been forced to recognize that the injunctions of Mohammed to treat with kindness those on whom nature has forgot to smile, are better observed by *his* followers, than are the lessons of our Divine Master by those who profess and call themselves Christians.

Attention and kindness to idiots are not, however, confined to Mohammedan nations, and we must recognize, as a beautiful example of those compensations which Providence seems to bring for every evil, that, in those countries where the greatest number of idiots is found, the popular sympathy in their behalf is the most developed. In certain districts of France, the common appellation of an idiot is *the innocent* ; and the etymology of the word which designates one of the largest classes of idiots, the *crétins*, is itself a key to the senti-

ment of sympathy and fraternity of which I speak. Crétin is a popular corruption of *Chrétien* (Christian), and, in the Alps and Pyrenees, the kindness of the poor peasants towards this unhappy class is a beautiful and touching commentary upon the name they bear.

These cases of isolated kindness have, however, secured only the physical comfort of a few ; and it must be confessed that the intelligent action of philanthropic individuals or of enlightened governments has, until quite recently, done no more. One of the most judicious of living French physicians, Voisin, contrasts the efforts made in behalf of idiots with those which modern science and modern philanthropy have so successfully made in behalf of the insane, and he continues: "In every age, idiots have been far more unfortunate than the insane. At Sparta, they shared the fate of sickly children, and were thrown into the Eurotas ; and when, in our time, efforts have been made to ameliorate the treatment of those who had lost their reason, nothing has been done for those who, from their infancy, gave evidence of an obtuse and incomplete intelligence, limited to a certain number of phenomena. Once smitten by the terrible appellation of idiot, the child inspires only disgust and horror ; and, deprived of all assistance, sequestered from all society, he remains eternally plunged in the darkness of his infirmity."

But the surprise which one naturally feels at the small progress heretofore made in the treatment of idiocy, is lessened on examining the narrow opinions relative to it emitted by those who, from their earnest labors for the insane, have acquired a just title to respect. Look, for instance, at the opinions of Pinel, and even of Esquirol. Look into almost any work which treats of idiots, and see the confidence with which they are described as "beings devoid of understanding and heart," or as "*human brutes*." The great *Dictionnaire de Médecine*, edited by Breschet, Orfila, Velpeau, and others, in its 16th volume, published in 1837, describes idiocy (p. 212) as "an absence of mental and affective faculties, and an almost complete nullity of the cerebral functions" ;—and further on, in the same article, says: "It is useless to attempt to combat *idiotism*. In order that the intellectual exercise might be established, it would be necessary to change the conformation of organs which are beyond the reach of all modification !"

The confidence with which this is announced, is only surpassed by that with which Gall condemned to perpetual imbecility all those whose volume of brain failed to fill his insatiable calipers. After describing, in his work upon the Functions of the Brain, several skulls which he has passed in review, he declares that one whose

head presents certain dimensions *must be necessarily an idiot*. "Never has an exception to this rule been found; never will an exception be found." *

Unfortunately for Gall's theory, but fortunately for those suspected of imbecility, many exceptions *have "been found"*; † fortunately, also, for the poor idiots, the error of those who denied them all intelligence, and who pronounced them incurable, has been proved, the interdict against them revoked, and the fact triumphantly established that, however degraded their condition, however devoid of all human faculties they may seem to be, they carry within them the holy spark which intelligent sympathy may inflame. During the past six months, I have watched, with eager interest, the progress which many young idiots have made, in Paris, under the direction of Mr. Seguin, and, at Bicêtre, under that of Messrs. Voisin and Vallée, and have seen, with no less gratification than astonishment, nearly one hundred fellow-beings who, but a short time since, were shut out from all communion with mankind,—who were objects of loathing and disgust,—many of whom rejected every article of clothing,—others of whom, unable to stand erect, crouched themselves in corners, and gave signs of life only by piteous howls,—others, in whom the faculty of speech had never been developed,—and many, whose voracious and indiscriminate gluttony satisfied itself with whatever they could lay hands upon, with the garbage thrown to swine, or with their own excrements;—these unfortunate beings—the rejected of humanity—I have seen properly clad, standing erect, walking, speaking, eating in an orderly manner at a common table, working quietly as carpenters and farmers; gaining, by their own labor, the means of existence; storing their awakened intelligence by reading one to another; exercising, towards their teachers and among themselves, the generous feelings of man's nature, and singing in unison songs of thanksgiving!

It is a miracle, you will exclaim; and so, indeed, it is,—a miracle of intelligence, of patience, and of love. When I expressed to the teacher of the school at Bicêtre, M. Vallée, my gratitude and my surprise at the result of his efforts, his reply was as profound as it was beautiful and modest: *Il ne faut, Monsieur, que la patience et le désir de bien faire*—"Patience, and the desire to do good, are all that is necessary." More than this is necessary, and I felt bound to complete his sentence by adding to it the noble motto which Don Henry of Portugal engraved on his shield, and, by his conduct, justified so well,—*le talent de bien faire*. Patience and the talent, as

* Gall, "*Sur les Fonctions de Cerveau*," t. ii. p. 330.

† For an interesting account of these exceptions, see Parchappe, *Recherches sur l'Encéphale*, p. 32.

well as the desire, to do good, are all required ; but these can all be found in the community where Laura Bridgman has been taught, and, the possibility of success now fully established, it would be an insult to Massachusetts to suppose that she will not be among the first to make those efforts for her idiot population which many European states are already commencing.

The fact, I have said, is now clearly established, that idiots may be educated,—*that the reflective power exists within them, and may be awakened by a proper system of instruction* ; that they may be raised from the filth in which they grovel to the attitude of men ; that they may be taught different arts, which will enable them to gain an honest livelihood ; and that, although their intelligence may never, perhaps, be developed to such a point as to render them the authors of those generous ideas and great deeds which leave a stamp upon an age, yet, still, they may attain a respectable mediocrity, and surpass in mental power the common peasant of many European states.

Before entering into details of the method or system by which this is accomplished, it is proper to give some account of efforts that have been made for the teaching of idiots. The first methodical attempt which has come to my knowledge, was that commenced in 1800, by Itard, upon a boy found wild in a forest in the centre of France, and known as the Savage of the Aveyron. Itard was a friend and disciple of Condillac ; and, during five years, he endeavored, with an indefatigable perseverance, to develop, at the same time, the intelligence of his pupil and the theories of the sensualist school of philosophy. The results, part of which you will find exposed in the two reports of Itard (Paris, 1800, and Imprimerie Impériale, 1807), were not satisfactory, and the attempt was abandoned. In 1828, it was revived, at Bicêtre, by Dr. Ferrus, then the principal physician of that establishment, who undertook the education of a few of the more intelligent of the idiots, and this example was followed, in 1831, by Dr. Falret, at the Salpêtrière. In 1839, when Dr. Voisin was made physician of Bicêtre, a school was organized, which, although producing some good results, was very incomplete, until Mr. Seguin, who, since 1837, had occupied himself in private with the education of idiots, was, in 1842, named director. He had conceived and put in practice a method of education, the happy results of which were certified to by Esquirol, in 1839 ; by a committee of which Orfila was chairman, named by the administrative council of Paris Hospital, in 1842 ; and in 1843, of a committee of the Institute (Academy of Sciences) of which Serres, Flourens and Pariset were members.* During the time of his direction, Mr.

* See *Comptes Rendus de l'Acad. des Sciences*, t. xvii. p. 1295.

Seguin published, in two pamphlets, the results of the first and second quarters of his efforts at Bicêtre. Here he remained, however, only one year, some personal difficulties having arisen between him and the physicians of the establishment, which resulted in the nomination of another to his place. The school has since been under the general superintendence of Dr. Voisin, and under the special direction of Mr. Vallée, while Mr. Seguin has confined himself to private instruction in Paris.

In Switzerland, Dr. Guggenbühl has founded an establishment for the education of crétins, which, within the past three years, has been most satisfactory in its results. More recently, at Berlin, Dr. Saegert has commenced the education of some twenty idiots, and has given an account of the results of one year's efforts, in a pamphlet, which, I hope, you will receive direct from Berlin at the same time as this letter. I send you now a copy of the reports of Dr. Guggenbühl, and also of those made by Seguin, when director of the school at Bicêtre, together with a copy of his large work, in which he explains fully the method he has been led, by experience and reflection, to adopt. I send you also a memoir upon the same subject, by Dr. Voisin.

In the remarkable work of Seguin, you will find details upon the progress of his idiots, stage by stage. He considers their treatment and education as possible on two conditions: 1st, that the treatment be not only hygienic, but moral; and 2dly, that the education be, not the putting in action of acquired faculties, which is the education of common schools, but the development of the functions, of the aptitudes, of the faculties, and of the instinctive and moral tendencies. These must be ascertained by a careful physiological and psychological examination or analysis of each case, a form or table for which is proposed by him. Another table, proposed by Voisin, you will find in his memoir. The education of idiots may, of course, be attempted at any age; but little success can be counted on unless it commence when they are young. Indeed, Seguin considers this success to be the exception to a rule which applies not alone to idiots; viz., that the aptitude to receive instruction is peculiar to youth. After the prior examination has been made, the education is commenced upon,—

- 1st. The moving power; and is followed up by
- 2d. The senses;
- 3d. The perceptive faculties;
- 4th. By gymnastics of comparison;
- 5th. By gymnastics of invention;
- 6th. Excitement of sentiments and instincts by moral necessities;
- 7th. Special excitation of the faculty of spontaneousness;

8th. Incessant provocation to regular action, to speaking, and to the exercise of faculties then developed.

The aptitudes thus created are then applied to different specialties, according to the fortune, age, or position of each individual, taking care to choose, in every case, an occupation which will keep in activity the muscular system as well as the mental faculties.

Mr. Seguin assures me that the average proportion of cases which have come to his knowledge, in which this treatment has failed of success, is not more than one in a hundred; and if nothing more be done, the repulsive symptoms of idiocy, which are all the result of *habit*, and not imposed by nature, may, at least, be removed.

It is the system of Seguin, which, as I before observed, was put in practice at Bicêtre. Since his separation from that establishment, some modifications have been made; but the same general method has been followed up under the direction of Dr. Voisin, and of the intelligent and devoted teacher, Mr. Vallée. The best idea of what may be done, will be formed from a knowledge of what is done there. It is to be regretted that no reports are published there; a fact which renders it necessary, in order to have anything like a satisfactory idea of the mode of proceeding, to follow up, personally, for a certain time, the course of treatment pursued; an undertaking, the labor of which, I may say from personal experience, is more than compensated by the pleasure of becoming an eye-witness to such astonishing results.

Let us take a young idiot, in whom scarce any of the senses appear developed; who is abandoned to the lowest passions, and who is unable to walk or to execute voluntary movements. He is brought to Bicêtre, and placed at once in the class of those boys who are executing the moving power. Here, with about 20 others, who have already learned to act somewhat in unison, he is made, at first by holding and guiding his arms, and feet, and afterwards by the excitement of imitation, to follow the movements of his companions. These, at the order of the teacher, go through with various steps and movements of the head, arms and feet, which, at the same time that they give wholesome exercise to the animal part of the system, develop the first personal sentiment that of rest and immobility. After this, the class is made, at the word of command, to designate various parts of the body. On the 20th January, the number in this class was 18, some of whom had been several months under treatment, others of whom had been just attached to it. The teacher, 1st, indicated with his hand a part of the body, —as head, arms, hand, face, hair, eyes, and named it aloud: the children repeated the movement, and touched the part; 2d, the teacher designated with the voice a part which the idiot touched;

3d, he designated a part by gesture, and the pupils named it aloud. There are many, of course, who are slow to do this ; but the love of imitation, and the care of teachers, produce in time the necessary regularity of movement. The organ of speech has yet, however, to be developed in others.

A complete series of gymnastic exercises, adapted to the various necessities which the physiological examination has established for each case, is now followed up ; the result of which is, to create an equilibrium between the muscular and the over-excited nervous system ; to fatigue the idiot sufficiently to procure him a sound and refreshing sleep ; and to develop his general intelligence. At the same time, the hygienic treatment, adapted to his peculiar case, is applied. He is exposed to the light of the sun, to fresh air ; is made to go through frequent ablutions, and is warmly clad. In most cases a tonic diet is adopted, and he is placed at table where the monitors, by dint of industry and example, teach him to eat as do those around him.

The next step is to educate the senses, beginning with that of feeling ; and beginning with this, inasmuch as it is the sense by which the idiot acquires most readily a knowledge of external objects, long before his eye is accustomed to fix their image, or his ear to listen to sounds. Smell and taste are next cultivated ; the former by presenting to the pupil various odors, which at first make no impression whatever, rose and assafoetida being received with equal favor ; by degrees, and as the harmony of the functions is restored, and the intellectual activity developed, this sense is awakened, and lends again its aid to awaken others. The sense of taste is roused in the same manner, by placing in the mouth various substances, alternately, sapid and acid, bitter and sweet.

The power of speech, so imperfect in all, is the most difficult to develop ; but a method, improving upon that which Pereire practised, in 1760, and which has been since successfully followed up in Germany, has been adopted at Bicêtre, and also in the private practice of Seguin, with great success. This is, however, the part of idiot education that proceeds the slowest, and which, more than any other, except, perhaps, the moral treatment, requires the greatest attention, patience, and intelligence, on the part of the teacher.

The sight is next cultivated ; and here, as indeed in every part of this miracle of instruction, great difficulties were at first encountered. The eyes of the idiot are often perfectly formed, but he sees nothing ; they fix no object. The organ he possesses, but it is passive and dormant. The senses of smell and taste have been developed by direct action upon them ; that of touch, by putting the hand in contact with different bodies ; the stagnant eye of the

idiot cannot, however, be moved by the hand of another. The method employed is due to the ingenuity of Seguin. He placed the child in a chamber, which was suddenly darkened, so as to excite his attention; after which a small opening in a shutter let in a single ray of light, before which various objects agreeable to the pupil, arranged upon slides, like those of a magic-lantern, were successively passed. The light, and its direction, having once attracted his attention, was then by a change of the opening in the shutter moved up and down, to the right and left, followed in most cases by his heretofore motionless eyeballs. This is succeeded by exercises of gymnastics, which require the attention of the eye to avoid, not a dangerous bruise, but a disagreeable thump; games of ball and battledoors are also used to excite this sense. Another means employed, is to place yourself before the idiot, fix his eye by a firm look, varying this look according to various sentiments; pursuing for hours, even, his moving but unimpressed orbit; chasing it constantly, until finally it stops, fixes itself, and *begins to see*. After efforts of this kind, which require a patience and a superiority of will that few men possess, the first reward comes to the teacher himself, for his identity is recognized by other means than the touch, and he catches the first beam of intelligence that radiates from the heretofore benighted countenance.

As a consequence of this development of sight, certain *notions*—not ideas—are taught the child; these are those of form, color, dimension, configuration, etc., etc. Form is taught by means of various objects,—by solid blocks, such as cubes, hexahedrons, etc., and by sheets of pasteboard, cut in squares, and other geometrical figures. The pupils soon distinguish and name the different varieties of triangles,—isosceles, scalene, equilateral and right-angled, and distinguish the square from the parallelogram, lozenge, and trapezium. There are now, at Bicêtre, some in whom the sense of feeling is more acute than that of seeing, and who can distinguish and name these different forms by the touch, without being able to do so by the eye. For giving the notion of color, one among various means, which is the most simple, appears to me at the same time the most useful, inasmuch as it excites the reflective faculty. Two large sheets of pasteboard have drawn upon each of them a star,—on one, in simple lines, on the other, with its rays painted with prismatic colors. Small pieces of pasteboard, corresponding in color and form to these rays, are given to the pupil, who is taught to observe the similarity between the rays which he holds and those of the colored star, and then to cover the original rays of this star by the similar rays which are in his hands. After this, by the example of his teacher and by the exercise of his reflective power,

he compares with his movable rays, upon the uncolored pasteboard, the colored star.

To teach these distinctions of color and form, the same patience and will are necessary as in all the other parts of this most interesting system of instruction. During the autumn of 1845, I watched with interest, at Nantes, the first essays made by the distinguished oculist, Dr. Guépin, to educate the sight of a young man from whose eyes he had, a short time before, removed cataracts, but who enjoyed all his faculties but that of sight. The labor in this case, to develop *one* faculty, was indeed great, although aided by all the other faculties. Imagine what that labor must be, in the case of the idiot, where this mutual assistance is wanting.

The muscular and the sensorial system having been developed, the moral education follows; and here we are brought to observe the great difference between the system adopted by Seguin, and successfully pursued at Bicêtre, and that which failed in the hands of Itard. Itard held, with Condillac, that *all simple ideas are the result of sensation alone*, while Seguin insists on the existence of an internal, intelligent, reflective power, which, seizing the *notions* furnished by the senses, reasons upon them and produces *ideas*.

"The senses," says Seguin (p. 459), "are the immediate agent of *notions*; the intelligence, the immediate agent of *ideas*. But the capital difference between a notion and an idea is, that the first appreciates the physical properties of things, and the second, their relations. Thus the child, placed in presence of an unknown object, acquires, by his senses, *notions* of its form, size, sound, color, etc., but he acquires the *idea* only by a knowledge of the relations of that object to other objects or phenomena which surround him. . . . An idiot, or a child, may acquire a notion of a key so as to distinguish it from other objects or other keys; but it is only by seeing it in connection with a lock, by observing and reflecting upon its function there, that he forms an idea of a key."

This difference of the notion and the idea once established, the great moral task is to exercise the inborn intelligence by bringing the pupil to perceive and reflect upon the relations that exist between the notions which he has acquired. In connection with this, it is but proper to correct an error into which Seguin throughout his work, and Voisin in his memoir, have both fallen, in common, however, with most French and many German writers; viz., that of placing in the same category the systems of Condillac and Locke. Condillac taught that all simple ideas are derived immediately from the senses, and that the *faculties of our mind are but our sensations transformed*; while the system of Locke, on the contrary, which, deriving our knowledge of *external objects* from the senses, recog-

nizes at the same time *the existence of an independent reflective power, essential for the completion of our stock of ideas*,* would seem to be directly in accordance with the results obtained by this experiment of education.

Another great task is the moral education, which commences, however, with the first contact of the teacher and pupil, and inspires the sentiment of authority; and, relative to this, the duty or faculty of obedience. Experience has shown that it is not by severity that this can be brought about, for that can seldom be long maintained; and the alternations which teachers who indulge in passionate severity so often present, of brutal harshness and insignificant weakness, inspire in the idiot, as well as in every one who thinks, the idea, *not* that the authority embodied in his teacher is the firm, calm expression of a moral law, but that it is the result of caprice and selfishness, against which his own instinct of self-defence compels him to combat. Brute force and distrust never yet created anything good; not so firmness, calmness, sympathy, justice.

It is to his being thoroughly penetrated with this sentiment that I attribute much of the success of Mr. Vallée at Bicêtre. What that success has been, and what the present school is, thanks to the efforts of Seguin, Voisin and Vallée, will be better seen, perhaps, by following up a day's work, at the school than by tracing out the progress of an individual idiot. This will give us the division of time, the different studies and labor pursued, and will enable me to make some necessary observations which I could not, without disturbing the order of my letter, introduce in any other place.

The number of pupils in the school has varied, for some time past, from 80 to 100. At five o'clock they rise, and pass half an hour in washing, combing, and dressing, the monitors (pupils more advanced) aiding those whose instruction is but recently commenced. They then pass into the hall of classes, and range themselves in a double line,—no easy task for the beginners,—when they sing a simple morning prayer, repeated to them by the teacher. After this they make their first breakfast of a simple slice of bread. The class for the education of the senses now begins and fills up the time till 8.15 A. M. In the first or highest division several occupy themselves with face and landscape drawing; and others less advanced with geometrical drawing upon the blackboard. The third division, divided into sections, is of those who are exercising the senses of smell, taste, sight, and observing color and form by the method I have before described. The sense of hearing is exercised, among other means, by the pupils' learning to distinguish and name,

* See Locke on the Understanding, book ii. chap. i. sect. 4.

while blindfolded, the natural sounds as produced by the cords of a bass-viol. Meanwhile the youngest class of 18 or 20 is going through its elementary gymnastics of the moving power.

From 8.15 to 9 A. M. is taken up by the study of *numeration* and *arithmetic*. Here the whole school is divided into frequently changing groups, according to the various capacities developed. The lowest of all is ranged in line, and taught to count aloud up to 30; a series of sticks, balls, or other material objects, being given them at the time. This helps to ameliorate their speech, and to stimulate to imitation those who have not that faculty. Another group is set to climb upon ladders, counting the number of rounds as they go up,—and thus the muscular system and knowledge of numeration are simultaneously developed. A higher group is of those who count up to 50 with counters, and who, by means of them, get an idea of unity, plurality, subtraction, addition, and equality. A higher group still has learned to count up to 100, and another group is learning by means of movable figures taken from a case the combinations of numbers. Higher still are boys working upon their slates, or going through calculations upon the blackboard, with a facility and precision that any pupil of Warren Colburn might envy.

From 9 to 9.45. Breakfast, of soup and a plate of meat. The pupils are here seated at table, and eat with fork and spoon, the more adroit aiding those less so.

9.45 to 10.30. Recreation in open air,—running, playing ball, driving hoop, or cultivating a small plot of ground, the hire of which, for three months, each one may gain by a certain number of tickets of good conduct.

10.30 to 11.15. Reading class, in which all take part, divided, however, into various groups, as before.

11.15 to 12. Writing class. Here the lowest group is taught only to trace on the blackboard, with a ruler, these lines:—



The next group is taught to make upon the board the rudimental characters, as



making the three in each line. After this they write on slates, and when farther advanced, the monitor being ready to guide their

hands, they write in ruled books. The highest class rules its own books, and writes alternately a page of large and fine hand.

12 to 12.30. Gymnastics.

12.30 to 1. Music.

1 to 4.45. Manual labor. In this all take part; some as shoemakers, some as carpenters, or rather cabinet-makers, and some as tillers of the ground. One of the best exercises for the body, *inasmuch as it compels the idiot to walk and balance himself unaided*, is that of wheeling a barrow, charged with a weight proportionate to his strength. The most stupid may be soon taught this. Others, more intelligent, wield spade and pick-axe most energetically and profitably; but nowhere does their awakened intelligence appear more satisfactorily than in the workshop of the cabinet-maker. When one of them has sawed through a plank, or nailed together two pieces of wood, or made a box, his smile of satisfaction,—the consequence of “something attempted, something done,”—the real result of which he can estimate,—is beautiful to see. Nor is their work, by any means, to be despised. With one cabinet-maker as teacher and monitor, they performed last year all the work necessary for their school-room and dormitories, as well as for a good part of the great establishment of Bicêtre. At shoemaking they show intelligence; but this is too sedentary an occupation for them. Some, however, who have quitted the school work at it; but the great number of them become farmers and gardeners.

After this manual labor they dine, and after dinner play till 6.15, P. M.

From 6.15 to 7. Grammar class; the lowest group is taught to articulate syllables; the highest, as much as in any grammar school.

From 7 to 8.15 is passed in reading one to another, or in conversations and explanations with the teacher, upon things which may excite the reflective power. Two evenings in the week this hour is devoted to a concert and a dance.

After this comes the evening prayer, sung by all; and then, fatigued, but happy, they retire to rest.

Such is a day at the school of Bicêtre. Every Thursday morning the teacher takes them to walk in the country, and then inculcates elementary notions of botany, designating by their names, and impressing by smell, taste, and sight, the qualities of different flowers and useful vegetables which they see. At the same time he explains, by locality, the first elements of geography. On Saturday evening there is a distribution of tickets of good conduct, three of which, I have before observed, pay the rent of a garden, and one of which may buy off for another, with the consent of the teacher, the punishment adjudged for certain slight acts of negligence. You will

see at once the effect which this must have upon the generous sentiments of the pupils. The sentiment of possession is developed,—the rights of property taught; but its duties and its true pleasures are, at the same time, impressed.

These tickets of good conduct are given also to those who are designated, *by the pupils themselves*, as having done some kind and generous action,—as having been seen to run to the aid of one who had stumbled at play,—who had divided among his companions the *bonbons* he may have received from a visitor, or who had helped, in any way, one weaker than himself. Thus they are constantly on the look-out for good actions in one another; but they are most positively forbidden to repeat the negligences or unkind conduct which they may observe. The surveillance of the monitors is sufficient to detect these; and even were it not, Mr. Vallée prefers that they should go unpunished, rather than that they should serve to cherish the grovelling sentiments of envy and malice which lurk in the breast of the informer and the scandal-monger.

I know no spectacle more touching than this Saturday-evening distribution of the rewards of real merit.

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You will see how easy it would be to enlarge upon this sketch; but, I trust, what I have already written will be sufficient to convince even the most incredulous, that there is nothing either visionary or impracticable in the attempt to raise this unfortunate class of our fellow-beings from the state of misery and degradation to which they have been hitherto condemned in all ages and in nearly every land. For other nations, the education of the deaf, the blind, the infirm in intellect, may be regarded as a philanthropic provision, or as a compliment to civilization; for republics, it is an imperative duty, the necessary result of the principle on which they are founded, and by which they are sustained,—*the principle of justice*, that accords to every one, not as a privilege, but as a right, the full development of all his faculties.

Believe me, my dear Dr. Howe,

Your faithful friend and servant,

GEORGE SUMNER.

[Dr. Howe's complete report on idiocy (Senate Document, No. 51—1848) is too voluminous to be reprinted here. For a synopsis of the same, see Appendix B.]

[Senate—No. 106.]

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

The Joint Committee on Public Charitable Institutions, to which was referred the report of the commissioners appointed by the governor and council, under the Resolve of April 11, 1846, to inquire into the condition of the idiots of the Commonwealth, to ascertain their number, and whether anything can be done for their relief, ask leave to report,—

That common observation, the official report of the various town officers, and the research of commissioners appointed for the special purpose, all concur in showing that there is a large number of idiotic persons in the Commonwealth who live in a state of brutish ignorance, idleness, and degradation, and go down to the grave like the brutes that perish, without a ray of religious, moral, intellectual light; and experience has shown that, where such persons are taken at a proper age, they may be trained to habits of decency, industry, and sobriety, and lifted up from the slough of mere animal existence to the platform of humanity; and the State admits the claims of every one of its children to a share in the common blessings of education, and provides it by special enactments and at great expense for those who cannot be taught in common schools, such as the blind and mutes; and idiots, the most helpless and wretched of all, are most in need of skilful instruction; and that religion and humanity demand that a fair trial should be made of their capacity for improvement. Under these considerations, your committee ask leave to report the accompanying Resolves.

Per order of the Committee.

THOS. BRADLEY, *Chairman*.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty-Eight.

RESOLVES concerning Training and Teaching Idiots.

Resolved, That there be paid out of the treasury of the Commonwealth, a sum not exceeding twenty-five hundred dollars annually, for the space of three years, for the purpose of training and teaching ten idiotic children, to be selected by the governor and council from those at public charge, or from the families of indigent persons in different parts of the Commonwealth: *provided*, that an arrangement can be made by the governor and council with any suitable institution now patronized by the Commonwealth for charitable purposes.

Resolved, That the trustees of the institution undertaking the instruction and training of said idiots, shall, at the end of each and every year, render to the governor and council an account of the actual expense incurred on account of said idiots; and if the amount expended shall be less than the sum received from the public treasury, the unexpended balance shall be deducted from the amount of the next annual appropriation.

Resolved, That the said trustees shall be authorized to require that the authorities of any town which may send any idiot paupers to them for instruction be required to keep them supplied with comfortable and decent clothing.

Resolved, That the governor be authorized to draw his warrant for twenty-five hundred dollars, on the treasurer of the Commonwealth, in favor of the treasurer of any institution which shall take the responsibility of training and teaching said ten idiots, as soon as he shall receive official information that the trustees will assume that responsibility.

AN ACT to incorporate the Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth.

SECT. 1. S. G. Howe, Samuel May, Stephen Fairbanks, their associates and successors, are hereby made a corporation, by the name of the Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth, for the purpose of training and teaching such persons; with all the powers and privileges, and subject to all the duties, restrictions, and liabilities, set forth in the thirty-eighth and forty-fourth chapters of the Revised Statutes.

SECT. 2. Said corporation may hold, for the purposes aforesaid, real estate not exceeding in value one hundred thousand dollars, and personal estate, the income of which shall not exceed ten thousand dollars.—[*Approved by the Governor, April 4, 1850.*]

[Senate—No. 36.]

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

IN SENATE, March 6, 1851.

The Joint Committee on Public Charitable Institutions, to whom was committed so much of the governor's message as relates to public charitable institutions, having visited the experimental school for teaching and training idiots, and carefully considered the condition of that unfortunate class of persons, report as follows:—

By a Resolution of the legislature, dated April 11, 1846, the gov-

ernor was authorized to appoint a commission "to inquire into the condition of idiots in the Commonwealth, to ascertain their number, and whether anything can be done in their behalf."

The commission was continued by a Resolution of the succeeding legislature, and made a full and final report in February, 1848, which was printed among the Senate documents, and numbered 52.

The report disclosed facts of a painful nature with regard to the number and condition of idiots, but also held out hopeful assurance that much might be done to ameliorate their unhappy lot.

The legislature, by Resolves dated May 8, 1848, made an annual appropriation of twenty-five hundred dollars for three years, to be devoted to an experimental school, for the purpose of testing the capacity of idiots for improvement. The governor made arrangements with the trustees of the Institution for the Blind for conducting the experiment. The school was commenced in October, 1848, and has been ever since in operation.

Your committee have visited this school, and been highly gratified by what they saw; the experiment seems to have succeeded entirely. The capacity of this unfortunate class for improvement seems to be proved beyond question. The school, however, must be abandoned unless adopted by the legislature, and put upon a permanent footing. Meantime, an institution has been regularly incorporated under the name of the "Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth," and the corporation is composed chiefly of persons who have been connected with the Institution for the Blind, while the experiment for training idiots was going on in that establishment.

Your committee, in view of all these facts, and considering that there are, and, in the natural course of events, must, for many generations, continue to be, in the Commonwealth, a large number of idiotic persons who are cut off by their infirmity from a share in the blessings of education, and whose condition is made still more unhappy and wretched by being left in ignorance and idleness, and all their consequent vices; and considering that it has been satisfactorily shown that such persons are not without capacity for improvement, but, on the contrary, can be trained to habits of decency, order, sobriety, and industry, and even taught the rudiments of knowledge; in a word, that they can be raised up from a level with brutes to a humble place upon the platform of humanity; and, considering that other classes of the unfortunates, who can be taught, have had special provision made for their education, therefore, your committee respectfully submit the accompanying Resolves.

For the Committee.

JOHN W. GRAVES, *Chairman.*

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty-One.

RESOLVES concerning Idiotic Children.

Resolved, That there be paid, annually, out of the treasury of the Commonwealth, to the treasurer of the Massachusetts School for Teaching and Training Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth, the sum of five thousand dollars, to be devoted to teaching and training indigent idiotic children belonging to this Commonwealth: *provided*, that the board of trustees, having the direction of said institution, shall be composed of twelve persons, four of whom shall be appointed by the governor and council; and *provided*, that the governor, lieutenant-governor, secretary of state, president of the senate, speaker of the house, and the two chaplains, shall constitute a board of visitors, whose duty it shall be to visit and inspect said institution as often as they see fit; to examine the by-laws and regulations enacted by the corporation, and, generally, to see that the object of said institution is carried into effect; and *provided*, *further*, that said institution shall gratuitously receive and educate thirty idiotic persons, to be designated by the governor; and *provided*, *further*, that other applicants of proper age and condition, children of inhabitants of this Commonwealth, who are not wealthy, shall be received at a charge not exceeding the actual average cost of the inmates; and *provided*, *further*, that the members of the legislature, for the time being, shall be, *ex officio*, visitors of the institution, and have the privilege, during the sessions, of inspecting the same.

Resolved, That the governor be authorized annually to draw his warrant for the sum of five thousand dollars, in four equal quarterly payments of twelve hundred and fifty dollars each, in favor of the treasurer of the Massachusetts School for Teaching and Training Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth, whenever he shall have satisfactory evidence that the terms and conditions of the foregoing resolve have been fulfilled.—[*Approved by the Governor, April 30, 1851.*]

[B.]

As the first complete report on idiocy, of which no copies can be had anywhere, is too voluminous to be reprinted entire with the other documents, it was considered advisable to print herewith an elaborate and minute review of its contents, published by Dr. Jarvis in the XXXIVTH number of the "American Journal of Medical Sciences," April, 1849.

Report made to the House of Representatives of Massachusetts on the Commission of Lunacy. House Doc. No. 72, pp. 10. Boston, 1846.

Report in part to the Legislature of Massachusetts by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Condition of Idiots within the Commonwealth. By SAMUEL G. HOWE. House Doc. No. 152, pp. 20. 1847.

Report on Idiocy made to the Legislature of Massachusetts by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Condition of Idiots within the Commonwealth. By S. G. HOWE. Senate Doc., pp. 147. Boston, 1848.

Causes and Prevention of Idiocy. pp. 24. By S. G. HOWE. Boston, 1848.

Next to the poverty of the body,—nakedness and hunger,—the poverty of the mind is occupying public attention and anxiety, and the insane have become, and are becoming, the objects of interest. But it must be confessed, that this interest was excited in former times generally, and in many places even now, not so much for the good of the suffering lunatics, as for the security of the healthy people. The insane were supposed to be too dangerous to others to be allowed to run at large; and they were, therefore, confined in strong places, and other means of security were used, so that the timid public should suffer no injury from them. Some were inclosed in worse places than violent criminals; and the jail, both here and elsewhere, divided its accommodations and its discomforts between the law-breakers and the lunatics; for their recovery was not a thing sought for or expected, and no plan was laid, nor means provided, for this purpose. These patients were deemed as permanent nuisances, and were merely to be kept, not out of harm's way, but out of the way of harming.

But, in the course of time, it was discovered that even these hopeless sufferers could be improved ; and that most of them, if attended to in proper time and manner, could be restored to health. Consequently, the insane, in many places, are provided with all the means of restoration, and receive as tender and as successful care as those who are sick with other diseases.

Notwithstanding these judicious provisions for and attention to the wants and sufferings of the lunatics, there are many whose disease sank into dementia, and they are now left in hopeless fatuity.

There was another and much larger class, who were born without mental capacity, or with it, at most, very imperfect ; or, in whom it had never been developed. These were the idiots. It could not be said that they were to be restored to health, because they had never been in any higher condition from which they had fallen. Their state was not a disease, that should be cured, nor a perversion from which they could be drawn back, but it was an original want of power or defect of development.

Believing that nature had unalterably fixed them in their present condition,—that, as one class of men were created for intelligence and self-direction, so these were created for idiocy and dependence,—the world has hardly entertained the suspicion that they could be improved, and has therefore left them to themselves in their degradation, and only provided for their animal wants, and protected them from harm.

Besides these congenital idiots, there were many others who had, in their early years, more or less intelligence, and gave promise of becoming like other men and women ; but, from some cause or other, and often from no cause that was known to their families or friends, their minds withered away, and they sank into idiocy as deep and as confirmed as those who were born to this condition.

All these, the demented, the congenital, and the supervened idiots, constitute a large class in every country, and bear very heavily upon every community for their care and support.

That fallacious document, the United States Census of 1840, states that there were then 1,271 idiots and insane in the State of Massachusetts, and 17,456 in the whole Union.

Certainly there are as many as, and, without doubt, many more than are here stated ; for, wherever any trustworthy inquiries have been made, the numbers of the insane and idiots have been found greatly to exceed the statements of the national census.

These idiots are the outcasts of society everywhere, and yet they are dwelling in the bosom of many families. For them and for their friends, for those who supported them and for the keepers who sometimes guarded them, there seemed no hope of amendment. There

was, rather, a fear, and even an expectation, that they would grow worse. The best that they could look for was, that they might go through, and end their low and imperfect life as they had begun it.

But, about fifty years ago, accident suggested to some persons in France, that idiots might be improved. Some philosophers of the sensualists' school, wishing to prove that all our ideas were received through the senses, undertook to teach a wild boy who had had been discovered wandering in the forest. He had no language, and apparently no ideas. But, after ineffectual attempts to teach him according to the sensualists' theory, it was discovered that he was an idiot. Yet the labor of Itard, the instructor, was not all lost, for it showed him that his pupil, however low and small his intellectual powers might be, could be educated in some degree. Itard becoming interested in this matter, continued his efforts in his enviable work, until he was convinced, not only that his single pupil could be improved, but that other idiots could be benefited by education.

Various attempts were made in France to do something for this class, and with a success proportioned to the wisdom and energy of the efforts. Among the most active was Mr. Edward Seguin, who, by his writings and his example, enlisted others to coöperate in the same work. Mons. Ferrus established a school for this purpose in Paris, in 1828, and Dr. Voisin, established another in 1839. Dr. Leuret and Mr. Vallée also lent their powerful aid to the work. The result of all these efforts proved, that humanity, even in its feeblest and most degraded condition, can almost invariably receive some advantage from education; and that the dormant power can be roused, and the darkened intellect can receive some light from proper instruction.

In the winter session of 1846, the legislature of Massachusetts authorized the governor—

“To appoint three persons to be commissioners to inquire into the condition of the idiots in this Commonwealth, to ascertain their number, and whether anything can be done for their relief, and to make report of their doings to the next general court.”

Happily for the success of this scheme, Dr. Samuel G. Howe, the philanthropic director of the Perkins Institution for the Education of the Blind, was appointed chairman of this committee of inquiry. He laid his plans with good judgment, and pursued them with his accustomed energy.

In the winter of 1847, the commissioners made their first report. But they had made but a partial survey of the State. They had sent circulars of inquiry to the clerks of every town and city. They had personally visited as many towns, and examined as many idiots, as

possible. They had obtained information from France, Prussia, and Switzerland, in regard to the manner and success of the treatment of idiots in the schools which had been established for their education in those countries.

By all these means the commissioners had obtained much valuable information, but not all that was desired. They were, therefore, authorized to continue their inquiries through another year.

At the session of 1848, Dr. Howe laid before the legislature the result of his second year's labor in this work; and the whole is published by order of the government, in a pamphlet of 100 pages of text, and an appendix of tables extending through 48 pages more.

These reports of Dr. Howe contain a great amount of important information relative to the personal and social condition, and the numbers of idiots, and to the supposed causes of idiocy; and are, therefore, valuable contributions to science.

They treat of the number of idiots in Massachusetts; definition of terms *idiot* and *idiocy*; capacity, condition, and treatment of idiots in private families and in almshouses; cleanliness, alimentation, and exercise of idiots; of European schools for idiots, and of a proposition for the same in Massachusetts. In the supplement, Dr. Howe treats of a classification of idiots, the supposed causes of idiocy, parentage, hereditary tendency to bodily and mental imperfection, circumstances which predispose to idiocy, physical and moral condition of parents, intemperance, self-abuse, intermarriage of relatives, and attempts to procure abortion.

The appendix contains several tables which describe the 574 idiots who were examined, showing their origin, present condition, and future prospects.

Dr. Howe personally visited many towns, and examined a great many idiots. Besides this, a competent and trustworthy agent, Mr. Enos Stevens, was employed for the same purpose. In the course of the years 1846 and 1847, they visited 182 towns, containing, at the last census, 392,586 inhabitants, and discovered 755 idiots. If the same proportion prevails in the whole State and nation, there are 1,418 idiots in Massachusetts, and 32,827 in the United States. They carefully examined 574 of these idiots, and made a record of their names, their physical, moral and mental character and condition, their parentage, history, and the probable causes of their disability; and the whole, with the exception of their names, is published in the report before us.

There are many minute details respecting the parentage, the habits and condition of the relations of the idiots, the bodily state and mental power of the subjects, the size and form of their heads, etc., which, to a careless observer, may seem trivial and irrelevant. But

as “this whole subject of idiocy is new, and science has not yet thrown her certain light upon its remote or even its proximate causes, nothing connected with them can be too minute to be observed by the philosopher who is in search of the origin of this low condition of man.”—*Report on Idiocy*.

Dr. Howe is a believer in phrenology, and has brought the principles of that philosophy to bear upon this subject; and although he has not attempted to base this investigation upon that science, yet he has availed himself of its classification of the powers and qualities of man in the conduct of his inquiry.

Supposing in advance, what seems to be shown in the result, that the mental and moral conditions are connected with the general bodily and the cerebral organization, the stature of the idiots, the size and shape of their heads, and the width and depth of their chests have been measured, and the shape of their whole frames and limbs have been examined, and the record of each fact is published.

A large portion—14 pages of the report on idiocy—is taken up with an attempt to define idiocy, or rather an attempt to reconcile the many various and conflicting definitions with which the medical and legal writers have endeavored to describe this state. Our space will not allow us to enter upon this part of the subject, nor should we hope to be more satisfactory than others who have gone before us. Of all the definitions that we find, none include all who are indubitably idiots, without including some who plainly belong to the more intelligent classes of mankind; and these definitions are so unlike, that no two of them, when applied, would include precisely the same number of individuals.

There is and can be no distinct and definite line drawn through society, on one side of which it can be confidently said, that all are idiots, and on the other side, all are of sound mind. The several moral and mental qualities and powers that enter into and make up the mind and character of man, are very unequally distributed. One person has much of one kind, and a disproportionately small quantity of another, and very little of a third, and perhaps none of a fourth. And another may have a very different distribution of power, and be strong in those in which the first is weak, and weak where he is strong. Thus, No. 413 has perception of musical sounds and ability to count, much above the average of men of sound minds, but his skill in the use of his perceptive and reflective faculties are much below them; but No. 139 has a very small arithmetical power, and is dull in regard to musical sounds, while his perceptive faculties are equal to the average of mankind, and his reflective faculties only half as strong. Then we often see a man who is sufficiently wise in ordinary affairs, but has no skill in num-

bers, or very acute in his perception of facts, but very dull in reasoning from them.

From the lowest idiot, who cannot even control his muscular power so much as to move his limbs or masticate his food,—who can neither see, nor hear, nor feel,—up to men of the highest order of intellect, there are all intermediate grades of intelligence, without interval between them. And the mental and moral qualities are distributed in such various proportions in these persons, that it is impossible to classify them strictly.

Idiocy is a defect, rather than a disease; a deficiency of the several powers in greater or less degree, rather than a disease of the powers that are originally perfect. Dr. Ray calls idiocy a defective development. This agrees with Esquirol, who says, “Idiocy is not a disease, but a state in which the intellectual faculties have never been manifested.” Most of the legal descriptions point to this. Blackstone says, “An idiot, or natural fool, is one who hath no understanding from his nativity.” The old English law recognizes the same origin.

After quoting several definitions of idiocy, Dr. Howe says, “Without pretending to scientific accuracy, idiocy may be defined to be that condition of a human being in which, from some morbid cause in the bodily organization, the faculties and sentiments remain dormant or undeveloped, so that the person is incapable of self-guidance, and of approaching that degree of knowledge usual with others of his age.”—*Report on Idiocy*, p. 19.

There are all degrees of this condition, from the weak-minded man who errs in judgment, and needs counsel of others in the conduct of his affairs, to the lowest idiot, who is but a mere organism.

Writers have made various divisions, each one according to his view of some prominent traits or defects of idiots. To these Dr. Howe adds a division of his own, which is as applicable as any that have been offered, and certainly is as convenient and practicable, inasmuch as it has regard rather to the degree of helplessness and dependence of idiots on others for direction and support.

“IDIOTS of the lowest class are mere organisms, masses of flesh and bone in human shape, in which the brain and nervous system have no command over the system of voluntary muscles; and which consequently are without power of locomotion, without speech, without any manifestation of intellectual or affective faculties.

“FOOLS are a higher class of idiots, in whom the brain and nervous system are so far developed as to give partial command to the voluntary muscles; who have consequently considerable power of locomotion and animal action; partial development of the affective and intellectual faculties, but only the faintest glimmer of reason, and very imperfect speech.

“SIMPLETONS are the highest class of idiots, in whom the harmony be-

tween the nervous and muscular system is nearly perfect; who consequently have normal powers of locomotion and animal action; considerable activity of the perceptive and affective faculties; and reason enough for their simple individual guidance, but not enough for their social relations.”—*Report on Idiocy*, p. 61.

Idiocy, like insanity, may be intellectual or moral, or both, and it may include all or any part of those classes of powers, and in any variety of combination.

Having determined as nearly and stated as clearly as possible what idiocy is, and what idiots are, Dr. Howe next describes the condition of those who had been examined.

Of the 574 idiots, 420 were so from birth, and 154 were originally intelligent, but became idiotic in subsequent years.

Most of them are poor, and a large proportion are public paupers; 22 have property of their own held by guardians; 62 belong to wealthy families; 225 belong to indigent families, but are not public paupers; 220 are town or state paupers; the pecuniary condition of 45 was not ascertained.

In regard to their dependence or power of self-sustenance,—

“Fifty-three are as helpless as infants; 74 are as helpless as children two years old; 94 as children seven years old; 138 can work to some small profit, if carefully watched and directed; 179 can nearly earn their board, if directed in work by others; and 36 can earn their board and clothing under the management of discreet persons.”—*Report on Idiocy*, p. 22.

This shows very plainly the absolute and entire dependence of most of this class, and the partial dependence of the rest on the sound and the healthy for support and direction.

Their ages range from six months to 103 years; 11 are under five; 49 under 10; 200 under 25; 372 over 25 years of age; and the ages of two are not stated.

The great end of all this inquiry was to ascertain the capacity of idiots for improvement. Dr. Howe thinks that 174 of the congenital idiots, and 22 of the supervened idiots under 25 years of age, and 195 congenital and 97 supervened idiots over 25 years old, are capable of improvement. These are proper subjects of education; they can be taught to do some kinds of labor, to acquire some kinds of knowledge, to attend to their own persons, and take care of themselves.

Of the younger class, 13 congenital idiots, and of the older class, 38 congenital, and 38 supervened idiots appear to be capable of little or no improvement.

Besides their helplessness and dependence, the situation of these idiots is deplorable indeed. Dr. Howe says of the public paupers, “They are of all sorts and grades of idiocy, from the mere simple-

ton who cannot take care of himself, to the drivelling idiot who wallows in his filth." "Some are comparatively free from the dominion of animal lust and appetite, and are mild, affectionate, and docile; others are a helpless prey to dreadful passions, depraved appetites, and disgusting propensities."

Some want instruction, and if properly encouraged and directed, will coöperate with a teacher in their education; others are as insensible and unimprovable as the oyster, and can receive no advantage from others, except to be fed, clothed, and sheltered.

A large portion of these idiots are kept in public almshouses, and although Dr. Howe says that he met with no instance of wilfully unkind treatment of idiots by keepers of any almshouses, and that "in most cases the overseers of the poor have given orders for the idiots to be treated with kindness," yet they suffer for want of proper management; for however humane and discreet in ordinary affairs the keepers of these houses may be, yet that special character which is best fitted for the direction of idiots, the peculiar talent which can best understand their degree of intelligence, and adapt its use of motives and its plans of action and government exactly to their comprehension, docility and power, is not sought for, and if it is found in any of the keepers, it is rather accidental than the result of design and care on the part of the public authorities.

In consequence of their disability of mind and body, idiots are incapable of taking so much care of their own persons, and doing so much for themselves as others do; they therefore need more care and aid from others to keep their bodies in proper condition. They have a lower sensibility, and their skins are not irritated by foreign matters which may gather upon them; and, moreover, their eyes are not offended by the sight, nor their nostrils by the foul odor of a filthy surface. They require, therefore, uncommon attention from others to keep them in a neat condition, and to preserve them from offensive filthiness of person.

But, for pauper idiots generally, the means of this extraordinary attention are not provided; and, according to the report, "in a great many of our almshouses, they are disgustingly filthy. They change their body and bed linen only once a week, and never bathe." In this last matter, idiots form no remarkable exception to a very large part of the people, and we fear that if this were to be adopted as a test of competent mind, very many who are considered as of sound mind would be thrown into the class of imbeciles.

Idiots do not need more cleanliness than other persons; but they do need as much, and it requires much more care from others to maintain their external purity, and if they are neglected they become more filthy and offensive.

Idiots have generally great appetites, and many of them eat voraciously. Minute inquiry was made as to the quantity of food which 444 usually ate, and this quantity was compared with that which others of the same sex and age usually eat, and the result shows that 20 consume less than the average; 81 just the average quantity; 343 more than the ordinary allowance, and 116 just double the amount that others eat; and the average for the whole 444 was about 50 per cent. more than that required for other persons.

Besides this enormous allowance which they obtain by consent of others, they often steal more, and some will devour the offal and the waste of the kitchen, even the foulest and filthiest garbage which is intended for the swine.

This gluttony increases their natural stupidity, for the nervous energies which might go to sustain a muscular or mental action are all absorbed in sustaining the digestive process.

Idiots are prone to inaction. They do not love motion, and still less labor. They prefer to bask in the sun, and lie there in utter quiescence of both body and mind. If they are required to work, they do it so unskilfully, and need so much direction and urgency, that their labor is unprofitable, and those who have the care of them find it easier to support them without, than with, their help. Consequently, very few of them work for the profit or advantage of the labor. Still fewer take any action for the sake of the exercise and for health. They will not do it voluntarily, and others are unwilling to urge it upon them. Their bodies are therefore sluggish, and their minds stupid. They have weak muscles, and though their frames may be sufficiently full, and their limbs sound, yet it is rather from fat than muscular fibre, of which they have comparatively little.

The general management of the idiots in private families is not much better than in almshouses, and in many it is much worse. Of the 354 who were examined in private houses, only five were treated very judiciously. These were submitted to the best influences for education and direction; they were taught all that they could learn; their powers were developed to the fullest extent; their propensities and passions were therefore controlled or restrained, and they were made comparatively happy and useful.

But these idiots are generally found in the poorest and most ignorant families. They are the children of the weak and the foolish, and sometimes of other idiots like themselves. There is, therefore, manifested in these families a gross ignorance, both of the causes and of the nature of their disability. Their children are thus subjected to the worst influences, the most improper treatment, and, in some cases, to the strangest experiments for their improvement.

"Sometimes they find that their children seem to comprehend what they hear, but soon forget it; hence they conclude that the brain is soft, and cannot retain impressions, and then they cover the head with cold poultices of oak bark, in order to tan or harden the fibres. Others, finding it exceedingly difficult to make any impression on the mind, conclude that the brain is too hard, and they torture the poor child with hot and softening poultices of bread and milk; or they plaster tar over the whole skull, and keep it on for a long time."—*Report on Idiocy*, p. 32.

Some give mercury to act as a solder, to close up the supposed crevices in the brain, etc.

Some encourage their children in their ravenous gluttony, because they think the poor imbeciles have no other enjoyment but appetite, and they shall be indulged in that.—*Report on Idiocy*, p. 33.

In conducting this investigation of idiots, each one was examined personally, and inquiry was made of the friends in regard to every point that would throw any light upon their present condition, or its origin. Their parentage, their health, habits, powers, propensities, were ascertained; their stature, their chest, and the size and shape of their heads were measured. The answer to each inquiry was noted in a memorandum-book, and the whole digested and arranged into tables, which we have in the report on idiocy. The names are omitted in the printed table; but each individual is numbered, and against this number are placed the answers to the forty questions that were asked.

The questions related to 1. Age. 2. Commencement of the defect; congenital, or not. 3. Height. 4. Temperament. 5. Tactile sensibility. 6. Command of muscular contractility. 7. Dynamic condition of the body. 8. Sensibility to musical sounds. 9. Skill in the use of language. 10. Capacity of fixing the sight on visible objects. 11. Ability to count. 12. Consumption of food. 13. Manifestation of the amative feelings. 14. Depth of chest. 15. Width of chest. 16. Greatest circumference of cranium. 17. Greatest diameter of cranium. 18. Diameter from the root of the nose to the occipital spine. 19. Transverse diameter over the ears. 20. Arc of cranium from the root of the nose to the occipital spine. 21. Arc from ear to ear. 22. Size of the lower frontal region. 23. Skill in the use of the perceptive faculties. 24. Size of the upper frontal region. 25. Skill in the use of the reflective faculties. 26. Size of the lateral region. 27. Activity of the faculties of self-preservation. 28. Size of the posterior region. 29. Activity of the social sentiments. 30. Size of the coronal region. 31. Activity of the moral sentiments. 32. Size of the cerebellum. 33. Activity of the animal nature. 34. Degree of ability to support themselves. 35. Parents in normal condition or not. 36. Parents drunkards or not. 37.

Number of cases of idiocy or insanity known among near relations. 38. Scrofulous, or not. 39. Given to masturbation, or not. 40. Teachable, or not. 41. Remarks.

The 1st, 3d, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, and 37th questions are answered in numbers positively, in regard to each one. The 4th is answered according to the preponderance and order of the nervous, fibrous, sanguine, and lymphatic temperaments. The highest is placed first, and the lowest last, against each idiot's name or number. The 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 22d, 23d, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32d, 33d, and 34th questions are answered in numbers, relative to the size, power and development of the same in 1,000 ordinary persons of the same age and sex. In these, 10 is assumed as the normal standard of size, power, etc., and those of the idiots are stated in numbers higher or lower, according to the fact. Thus, No. 395, who ate the average quantity of food, is stated as 10; No. 360, who ate double the average quantity, is stated as 20; No. 259 has no language, and is marked 0; No. 268 can use monosyllables, and is marked 1; and No. 190, who talks as other persons, is marked 10.

It may seem forced to state the sensibility to musical sounds, or activity of the moral sentiments or reflective faculties in numbers; yet it is the most convenient way of showing the relative quantity or force of the powers or affections. And as the comparison was made on the spot, and at the time when the answers were obtained, it is probable that these numerical statements are correct. The standard, however, is arbitrary, and various persons who associate with society of more or less cultivation and talent, and have different fields of observation, will have different standards, and consequently different notions of the power of these idiots. Yet we know of no better way of making and stating the comparison, and we put forth these statements of Dr. Howe in confidence that the whole will be sufficiently understood for the purpose of the author, who merely wished to give the best notion of the mental and moral and physical condition of these idiots.

The 2d, 35th, 36th, 38th, 39th, and 40th questions are answered "yes" or "no."

In the last column there are other remarks in regard to most of the persons examined, mostly in reference to parentage, health, habits, and condition of parents and other relations, and also in reference to the history and habits of the idiot.

This table includes idiots of all ages, from a babe of six months to a superannuated idiot of 103 years. Comparatively few are given in the earliest years. Of the 418 congenital idiots whose ages are stated, only 43 are under 10, giving a proportion of 114 per 1,000

of all, in the first decade of life, whereas the whole population of Massachusetts has 237 per 1,000 of all, in this decade. Probably many, perhaps most of the idiotic children may have escaped the notice of the commissioners.

Dr. Howe says, that "there are a great number brought into the world so deformed, that it is apparent that they must be idiotic and so feeble that they do not live through infancy." "Idiots of the lowest class perish in great numbers in infancy and childhood; fools last longer, and simpletons attain to nearly the ordinary longevity. Perhaps it is safe to say, that the average longevity of the lowest class of idiots is not more than six years." And in the opinion of the commissioners, the average duration of all congenital idiots is not more than twelve years.

As we are not sure that we have all the congenital idiotic children, we cannot determine the probable average longevity from this number. The average of all these is 28 years and two and a half months. The average age of all over 10 years old is 31 years and five and a half months. That of all the whites of the State of the same age is 31 years and nine months. So far as any inference can be drawn from this, an idiot, if he survive his tenth year, will live nearly as long as a person of sound mind. This would doubtless be an error. Probably the true longevity of all idiots, and of all above 10 years old, is less than those above stated. This viability depends, in great measure, upon the perfectness or imperfectness of their organization. Hence, idiots of the lowest class, who have the lowest organization, perish early; while simpletons, whose intelligence and organization are not much lower than those of other persons, and who are saved much of the anxiety, wear and tear of life that affect responsible men, often live to a great age. The one whose age is now 103 years belongs to this class.

"When a person appeared in infancy, or early childhood, to be idiotic, he is considered to have been born so." Those idiotic persons who never manifest more power than they now appear to possess, who, as they passed from infancy to childhood, did not put forth the talents of the new age, who, however low they may now be, have fallen from no higher degree of intelligence, are considered as congenital idiots. They belong to the class whom Dr. Howe considers as helpless as infants two years old.

There is another class who appeared in infancy to be as bright as other infants, and even when they were young children they showed no observable deficiency; but when they passed from this stage of life to the next older, they put forth no more power, and remained ever afterward as weak and helpless as young children of seven years old. These are supposed to have some native defect of organization

that prevents any greater expansion of intellect, under the ordinary influences, than they now exhibit.

Dr. Howe says :—

“It was probably the intention of the legislature to use the word ‘idiot’ in the popular and common sense. We have considered, therefore, all persons whose understanding is undeveloped, or developed only in a partial and very feeble degree, or who have lost their understanding without becoming insane, to be proper subjects for examination.”—*Report on Idiocy*, p. 21.

Of the 594 who were examined, 420 are reported as congenital idiots, and 154 became idiotic after birth; according to the table, 29 of these in youth, and some in early manhood, were of sound and active mind, and became afterwards insane, and then idiotic. The idiocy of the 154 is not caused, so far as can be known, by any defect of organization, but by some external cause, or some habits or disease in the course of life.

Here arises a confusion and doubt which, Esquirol says, many fall into in regard to the distinction between idiocy and dementia. Shall those who have once been intelligent but gradually fell afterwards into the idiotic stupor, without the intervention of lunacy, be considered as idiots or as demented persons? Esquirol solves the difficulty by disregarding the symptoms, and looking only at the history in making his distinction. “Idiocy is a state in which the intellectual faculties have never been manifested.”—*Maladies Mentales*, ii., 284.

“A man in dementia is deprived of that which he has once enjoyed. He is a rich man become poor. The idiot has always been poor and wretched.”—*Maladies Mentales*, ii., 285.

The stature of 288 idiots was measured. The average height of 172 males was 64.7 inches, and of the 116 females, 60 inches. These facts would be very valuable, if we had the standard height of healthy men and women with which we could compare them. Unfortunately, we have no such data. If, however, the general notion that 67.5 inches is the average height of adult males, this measurement will corroborate our opinion that idiots have a smaller stature than other persons.

The width and depth of the chest was ascertained in 224 adults, and their average corresponds precisely to that of other persons.

Temperament.—The temperaments of 417 idiots were ascertained and reported in the table. The four classes—nervous, sanguine, lymphatic, and fibrous—are stated in the order of their preponderance against each of the 417 persons. In 143 the fibrous, in 139 the nervous, in 102 the lymphatic, and in 33 the sanguine predominated, and stand first in the table.

Tactile and Cutaneous Sensibility.—Some have very great, even an unnatural, cutaneous irritability; others have very little sense of touch, so that they are not disturbed by flies and other insects on the skin, and take no pains to brush them off. This is not owing merely to general want of power in the nervous system. One female, case No. 210 in the catalogue, 19 years of age, has so little cutaneous sensibility that she takes no notice of flies on her skin, and very little of the prick of a pin, or pulling her hair. “But she is quite animated by the sound of music, and will leave off eating to listen to it.” She is therefore marked 4 as to sensibility of touch, and 13 as to musical sounds, 10 being the standard of each. The average of the 476 examined was 8.52.

Command of Muscular Contractility.—Idiots fail in the command of their muscles, and therefore they cannot control their limbs and direct them with the energy or precision of others. Hence they often walk with a waddling gait, and they make poor mechanics for want of power to use tools and strike with exactness. The average of the 444 examined was 8.33 to 10 when compared with other persons.

Dynamic condition of the body refers to “the general vigor of health, as manifested in the ability to put forth muscular strength. Five hundred and four were examined to ascertain this, and the average was 7.88 to 10 as compared with other persons of their age.”

Probably both the last averages are too large. Dr. H. very properly says that the former is too high. If a more careful examination could be made of the power and muscular control of these idiots, with tools that require precision of action, and with protracted labor that requires continued effort, a different and lower result would be found in regard to them.

Sensibility to the musical sounds, like other powers, is very various. Some have none, others have it in a high degree; one is marked 18, almost double the average of men, and there are all grades between them. Yet idiots are generally dull in this respect; and the average of the 300 who were examined was only 6.3, less than two-thirds of the power that is found in the rest of mankind.

Skill in the use of language, which is often made the test of intelligence, is generally very small in this class of persons. A few enjoy it as other persons. Of the 452 who were examined, one is marked as high as 13, one 11, and 10 are marked 10, and a very few 9 and 8. The rest are lower, and four have no language at all, and are therefore marked 0; and 31 are but little better, using only a few monosyllables, and are marked 1. The average of the whole 452 is 5, one-half the skill of the rest of mankind.

Ability to count is another test of power which was applied, and by which they were found wanting. Many cannot count at all; they

do not see the difference between two and three. Many can count one and two. If we give them one block, and ask how many they have, they may answer one, and then two when we add another; but when we add a third and a fourth, they still do not see more than two. Four hundred and sixty-one were examined with this view, and five had no conception of numbers, and are marked 0. One hundred and fifty-seven had some power, though in the lowest degree, and are marked 1. On the opposite extreme, six are marked 10, the usual average. One is marked 13, two 15, one 16, and one 18, having a power in the use of numbers which would be deemed extraordinary even among those who are sound in mind.

“No. 175 has little use of language. He is marked but 6 in that column; his intellect is very limited; he is, to all intents, an idiot; yet he has an astonishing power of reckoning. Tell him your age, and he will, in a very short time, give you the number of minutes. He is marked 18; he should, perhaps, have been marked higher.” The average of the whole 461 is only 3, less than a third of the power of men of good condition.

Some idiots are unable to *fix their eyes upon small objects*; they stare and gaze but they do not see with distinctness. The image of the object is formed on the retina, but no exactly corresponding sensation is excited in the brain. In this power there is less deficiency than in others; 367 of 442 have the average power of fixing their eyes, and are marked 10; nine have it in an unusual degree, and are marked 11. The average of all is not given, and probably it would not fall much below that of other men.

Size and Form of the Head.—The idiots who were examined have somewhat smaller heads than others, but there is not so great difference in this respect as is commonly supposed, as will be seen by the following averages of measurements. The first column of figures is the number of idiots who were examined; the second is the average measurement of idiots in inches, and the third is the average size of ordinary persons. M. and F. denote male and female:—

Greatest circumference of cranium,	M. 99	21.9	22.0
Greatest circumference of cranium,	F. 59	20.7	21.5
Diameter from root of nose to occipital spine,	M. 94	7.5	7.8
Diameter from root of nose to occipital spine,	F. 87	7.3	7.5
Transversed diameter over the ears,	M. 94	5.5	5.8
Transversed diameter over the ears,	F. 87	5.3	5.5
Arc of cranium from root of nose to occipital spine,	M. 87	13.3	13.8
Arc of cranium from root of nose to occipital spine,	F. 61	13.0	13.5

Arc from opening of one ear over to opening of			
the other,	M. 89	14.0	14.3
Arc from opening of one ear over to opening of			
the other,	F. 61	13.5	14.0

Yet there is a very great difference in regard to the manifestation of the several powers and propensities that are supposed by phrenologists to be connected with the several parts of the head.

Dr. Howe was president of the phrenological society, and is an accomplished scholar in that science. He is skilled in the practical application of its principles. His agent also was accustomed to cranial measurements, to craniological examinations, and to observing the connection between the cerebral developments and the mental and moral manifestations. Phrenology has therefore every advantage of skill, practice, and faith in its truth, to establish it more firmly by means of this investigation, and to give further proof of the soundness of its doctrines, in the correspondence between the prominence or deficiency of certain parts of the cranium and the strength or weakness of certain powers, sentiments or propensities.

But the following table, containing the result of Dr. Howe's observation, shows at least that he has found no new proof of practical phrenology in this new field of inquiry.

Comparison of the development of certain parts of the cranium, and of the mental and moral manifestations with the same in 1,000 ordinary persons, those in the class of sound persons being assumed as 10 :—

Development of the lower frontal region of the cranium, . . .	9
Skill in the use of the perceptive faculties,	5
Development of the upper frontal region of the cranium, . . .	9
Skill in the use of the reflective or reasoning faculties, . . .	3
Development of the lateral region of the cranium,	8
Activity of the faculties of self-preservation,—as cautiousness, cunning, etc.,	4
Development of the posterior region of the cranium,	8
Activity of the social nature, or attachment to others, . . .	6
Development of the coronal region of the cranium,	9
Activity of the moral sentiments,	6
Development of the region of the cerebellum,	7
Activity of the amative feelings,	14
Average activity of the animal nature, estimated by the developments of amative feelings, the dynamic condition of the body, and the consumption of food,	10

—*Report on Idiocy, Appendix, p. 52.*

For ten of these statements, 116, and in the 11th, 114, in the 12th, 70, and in the 13th, 115 idiots were measured and examined, and these are the results, and they are generally corroborated by the measurements and examinations of most of the others.

The average development of the several parts of the cranium of these idiots is, in comparison with that of sound persons, as 43 to 50,—that is, nearly as large. But the average power of the moral and mental faculties supposed to be connected with them, as compared with the same faculties in ordinary persons, is as 24 to 50,—less than one-half.

But, on the contrary, the cerebellum which has as much smaller proportionate development as 7 to 10, is connected with the moral manifestations which are all equal to, and some much larger, than the same in men whose cerebellum is of the ordinary size. The activity of the amative feelings is as 14 to 10, and the activity of the whole animal nature in these idiots is just equal to that of others, or as 10 to 10.

The great deficiency of power, in one case, may just be what a phrenologist would expect from the small deficiency of cerebral development. We are not sufficiently acquainted with the minutia of this science to determine what gradations of power should accompany certain gradations of development of the brain. Nor are we prepared to say whether the excess of the amative feelings ought not to be expected from the diminished cerebellum. We make no deductions from these facts. This we leave to those who wish to establish or disprove the phrenological system from them. We have no desire to do either. We will only say that these facts come to us from unquestionable authority, whose principles and habits would lead him to give due attention and weight to all facts that can have any bearing upon this science, but whose impartiality and regard to truth impel him to state every fact precisely as he finds it, whatever may be the conclusion to which it may lead.

Dr. Howe says: "It may be stated here, in general terms, that the result of this examination and measurement shows, that no dimensions of the head, except extreme diminutiveness, and no shape whatever, can be relied on as criteria of idiocy. A few of the worst cases of idiocy are those in which the head is normal as to size and shape. Nevertheless, the tables show that, taking the aggregate of all the cases, an obvious relation is seen between the size and development of the cranium, and of its different parts, and the amount of intellectual power and of the different kinds of mental manifestation."—*Report on Idiocy*, p. 65.

An inordinate appetite ranks high among the propensities of the idiot's animal nature. More than a quarter of those examined con-

sumed double the usual quantity, and some were insatiable with any amount of food. The average of the whole is 15 to 10, as compared with the food of other persons.

In some the excessive eating was enormous. One child of five years was in the habit of taking a gallon of milk daily, and "one boy of 13 has been known to drink six quarts of water a day," and another, after being reduced and limited as to his food, now consumes just double the average used by others.

The manifestation of the amative feelings is the saddest part of this whole picture; it reveals oftentimes the cause, and sometimes the terrible consequences, of idiocy. In 70 idiots who were examined, this propensity has a power, compared with that in sound persons, as 14 to 10. "In some cases it amounts to perfect mania," and it continues long after the period of youth, even into old age. One person, 66 years old, is given now to open and shameless masturbation. Another of 63 is given to "excessive venery." Another of 65 has been masturbating for 45 years; because, in these cases, although "the physical power breaks down, the dreadful propensity continues unabated." Among idiots masturbation is a very common vice. Out of 389 idiots who were examined, 204, of whom 75 are females, are known to practice it frequently. Cases were discovered of even little children addicted to this destructive habit; and worse than this, 19 little children were countenanced in this practice by intemperate, foolish, or degraded parents or nurses, even some took satisfaction in this evidence of their children's precocity.

Physical Condition.—Idiocy is often connected with other defects. Of the 574 idiots, 21 are blind, or have deformed eyes, 12 are deaf, 23 have deformity of mouth and nose, 54 have deformed hands or feet, 96 are paralyzed in some parts, 14 are torpid in feeling, 125 are subject to fits, convulsions are produced in three by use of tobacco, and 29 by anger; faintness, nausea, and vomiting are produced in seven by fright. Four hundred and ninety-one out of 497 who were examined are scrofulous.

Degree of Ability to Support themselves.—In the long table of individual idiots, in which is stated in numbers the degree of comparative ability of each one to support himself or herself, 13 are said to be able to do nothing, 48 can do one-tenth, 75 two-tenths, 96 three-tenths, 138 four-tenths, 175 five-tenths, and 32 six-tenths of the amount of labor sufficient for their support. And the average ability of the whole is a little more than one-third sufficient for this purpose.

There is some discrepancy between this statement and that which we quoted before, in which it was stated 220 are as helpless as children two and seven years old. But probably this might be explained

by the author. Perhaps this tabular and numerical statement refers to the possible condition and power of the idiots when under proper guidance, and the former statement to their present condition and power unaided by others. Nevertheless, both go to establish the same principle,—the dependence of this class of persons on others for their support.

There is another element to be included in this estimate ; that is, these persons can do as much as herein stated, “under the management of discreet persons.” Alone, their earnings would be much less, and probably in most cases nothing ; and when under the care of indiscreet persons, as are the parents of most of them, they do little or nothing towards their own maintenance.

Pecuniary Circumstances.—These idiots are mostly the children of poverty. Of the 529 whose pecuniary condition was ascertained, only 22 had property of their own, and 62 belonged to wealthy families, 225 are members of poor families, and 220 are public paupers.

Age.—Two hundred of these are under, and 374 over, 25 years of age.

Dr. Howe thinks favorably of their *capacity of improvement*. He says “that 196—almost the whole of the younger class—and 272—more than three-fourths of the older class—are capable of being improved in some degree, and raised somewhat from their present miserable condition.

“*The causes of idiocy* are matters of the greatest interest. Why are so many, why are any human beings found in this low, wretched and dependent condition?” This is a question that ought to interest the physiologist, the philanthropist, and the political economist. The causes of this low degradation of humanity should be ferreted out, and if possible removed, and the increase or the future production of idiots prevented.

Not knowing what are the necessary causes of this condition, we must be content with learning what are the preceding or co-existing events or circumstances, that, by their general or universal precedence to, or connection with, idiocy, may be presumed to stand as causes. In this matter Dr. Howe has done a good work. Without pretending to settle this question beyond all doubt, he has thrown much and valuable light upon it. He inquired into the history and condition of each case. He ascertained the character and health of the parents, the early and subsequent health of the subject, his or her organization and propensities, his or her habits, exposures, and indulgences ; and the result of each inquiry is stated in the table of his report.

The causes which produce idiocy—which prevent the develop-

ment of the ordinary mental and physical powers, that are essential to normal life, or impair or extinguish them after they have become partially or entirely developed—are probably many and various.

The first thing to be observed is the “low condition of the physical organization of one or both parents.”

It is not our intention now and here to give a dissertation on hereditary character or the transmission of qualities from parent to child. This subject requires more time and space than we now can give to it. Yet we hope ere-long to see it discussed in all its bearings here or elsewhere, and the connection of generations explained so clearly, that the world may be warned and put on its guard against every habit or action that may prevent the perfectness of health in the children.

We would merely say in passing, that we believe that parents can give to their children no other qualities or powers than those which they themselves possess, and that, whatever may be the condition of either parent when the germ, or the element, or the pabulum of life is given to their offspring, that condition, or the peculiarity of organization which is susceptible of that condition, will probably be transmitted to the child.

Dr. Howe has great faith in this principle, and rests much of his argument and explanations upon it; and he has shown so many facts to corroborate it, that it is not easy to withhold our confidence in his reasonings and conclusions. He says, “If ever the race is to be relieved of one tithe of bodily ills which flesh is now heir to, it must be by a clear understanding of, and a willing obedience to, the law which makes parents the blessing or the curse of the children; the givers of strength and vigor and beauty, or the dispensers of debility and disease and deformity.”

We have already shown, that very few of these idiots, whose history was ascertained, were the children of healthy parents. If they inherited any constitution from their progenitors, it was a feeble one at least, and in many instances there was a positive tendency to disease or weakness. Many idiots are the children of idiots or simpletons. Some whole families of these are idiotic, and others are mixed, being in part idiots and in part simple or weak-minded, and others are sound.

Fifty idiots were discovered whose parents were one or both idiotic or insane.

Forty-five parents have each two idiotic children; 13 have three each; eight have five each; one has five; one has seven; one has nine; and one has 11.

The report does not say whether in any or all of these 70 families there were other and sound children, nor whether in these

cases both or only one of the parents were insane or idiotic. Another remarkable fact shows the hereditary tendency. "In 15 families all of the children of the first marriage were idiotic or puny, while all those born of a second marriage of the surviving healthy parent, with a healthy person, were sound in body and mind."

The idiotic taint or hereditary tendency may be considered as the remote or predisposing cause which in many persons lies dormant, until it is stimulated to action by other and proximate or exciting causes, and then both together produce idiocy. Or, the hereditary taint, acting alone, may cause only weakness, which, under the best influences and education, may be contracted, and thus the child may prove to be merely a weak-minded man; or, under other influences, the child may grow to be a simpleton, or have some oddities in his character. But under bad influences, such as the care or neglect of weak, foolish, or wicked parents or associates, the child may become an idiot. In the same family there may be various exciting causes acting on the different children, and producing a corresponding variety of character among them. One child may be merely weak, another simple, a third odd, and a fourth idiotic.

Some of the children of tainted families receive the predisposition to idiocy from their parents, and carry it with them through life; but very careful management and judicious education avert all exciting causes, and these persons pass respectably through the world; yet they may transmit their hereditary taint to their children. Then this third generation, if not as well trained and guarded as their parents, may meet with the exciting causes and become idiotic. Or, if they pursue the faithful course of their fathers, the taint may still lie dormant in them, and they may escape, but yet possibly transmit the taint to the fourth generation, who may or may not be idiots, according to their education and self-management. In this way we may explain the apparent irregularity of hereditary character, and the reappearance of idiocy, insanity, or other hereditary disease in the third or fourth generation, after the second or third has enjoyed a perfect immunity from it.

Idiocy, therefore, although an hereditary disability, does not affect every successive generation, nor all the collateral branches of the same generation. Hence we find idiocy scattered among the various individuals or branches of the same family, touching some and omitting others. In such families, 49 idiots had one near relative idiotic; nine had two; six had three; four had four; six had five; three had 10, and one had 19 near relations like themselves.

The report does not state how many idiots were examined for this purpose, or whether any, or how many of the other 496 idiots were ascertained to have no relatives like themselves. We are, therefore,

unable to make any deductions from this statement, as to the proportion of idiocy which may seem to be hereditary, or the proportion which may be entirely original in the subject.

Very few idiots marry. This is a blessing, and so far it is a safeguard to the race. Humanity requires that the succession of idiots should be arrested. Yet many weak-minded persons and some simpletons marry and leave another generation more weak or simple than themselves. Some persons who have been temporarily insane or demented marry and send their taint or their liability to one or the other of these conditions down to their children.

But the most lamentable and certain, though less frequent cause of congenital idiocy, is the lasciviousness of some female idiots, whose illegitimate offspring are almost always like themselves, idiotic and lustful.

Some persons, who are irrepressibly addicted to masturbation, are advised to marry, as a means of protection from this ungovernable propensity. This, probably, is very well for them; it generally answers the intended purpose; but it is a cruel thing for their children. It entails upon them, perhaps, the same propensity, certainly a feeble constitution; often weak minds, and sometimes idiocy. Twelve of these idiots are the children of parents who were thus married. The other children of the same families, if there are any, if not idiotic, are probably feeble in body and mind, and enjoy a lower degree of life than the children of better or more healthy parents.

The near relationship by blood of the parents seems to be the cause of, or at least it is the precedent fact to, many cases of idiocy. We do not suppose that this connection is, of itself, the cause of idiocy. But if there are any weaknesses, or defects of body or mind, or tendencies to disease, or oddities in the family, they may be overpowered, or cease to appear, in the next generation, if those who have them marry with strangers, and mix their blood and life with those who have not these peculiarities; and thus the children may escape the imperfections or liabilities that otherwise might have been entailed upon them. But when two persons of the same blood and character unite together in marriage, their peculiarities are doubled in power by being combined in their children; and the odd or weak traits, which were subordinate in the parents, may predominate in their offspring.

In the course of this inquiry, the parentage of 359 idiots was ascertained. In 17 families the parents were near blood-relations. In one of these families there were five idiotic children born; in five, four each; in three, three each; in two, two each; and in six, one each. In these 17 families, 95 children were born; 44 idiots, 12

scrofulous and puny, one deaf, one a dwarf; 58 in all of low health or imperfect, and only 37 of even tolerable health.

The parents of Nos. 59, 60, 250, 251 were cousins, and had, beside these four idiotic children, four that were deformed.

Intemperance of Parents.—The habits of the parents of 300 of the idiots were learned, and 145—nearly one-half—are reported as “known to be habitual drunkards.” Such parents give a weak and a lax constitution to their children, who are, consequently, “deficient in bodily and vital energy, and predisposed, by their very organization, to have cravings for alcoholic stimulants.” Many of these children are feeble, and live irregularly. Having a lower vitality, they feel the want of some stimulation. If they pursue the course of their fathers, which they have more temptation to follow and less power to avoid than the children of the temperate, they add to their hereditary weakness, and increase the tendency to idiocy in their constitution, and this they leave to their children after them. The parents of case No. 62 were drunkards, and they had seven idiotic children.

Seven of the congenital idiots were the children of prostitutes; seven others were illegitimate.

The condition of the mothers during gestation may have some influence upon the health and character of the offspring. The commissioners made inquiry as to this matter in regard to as many as possible, and discovered that two of the mothers of the idiots were insane, two were drunken, 16 were sickly and feeble, and seven of these last suffered from fright; one had fits, and received a blow on the abdomen during her pregnancy; and another suffered from violent parturition. All the children who were born from these gestations were idiots from birth, with the exception of two, whose mothers were sickly, and one whose mother was injured. These three became idiots afterward.

Attempts to procure abortion may be injurious to the child, even though it be carried through and safely delivered at the end of the full period. At least seven children were made idiots, says the report, by these unsuccessful attempts. Young women thus sometimes try to get rid of their burden, or conceal their shame; not succeeding, they afterwards marry, and the child is born at the proper time, but is idiotic. Other children are successively born of the same parents, and give no evidence of ill-health or unsoundness of mind. Several cases of this kind are among those alluded to. One woman had seven sound children, and another had six, born in wedlock, though the oldest child of each of them, upon whom abortion was attempted, was idiotic.—*Report on Idiocy*, p. 90.

Looking upon idiocy rather as a deficiency of power, or as a dis-

ability, than as a disease,—as a negative, rather than as a positive, condition,—it is easy to suppose that it may be produced by a single cause, or by the coöperation of several causes which would not individually be sufficient to produce this condition, yet each may contribute its portion of influence to produce this deterioration of mental and physical power, and aid in making the child an idiot. Case No. 89 is an idiot of the lowest kind. He cannot walk, or hardly creep; he cannot feed himself with a spoon, nor can he speak. He has, apparently, no intellect. His father was intemperate, and was nearly related to his wife by blood. Her family were tainted with idiocy, and she had an idiotic cousin. She was much terrified and distressed in mind during the early part of her pregnancy, and was sick, and carried her child with much difficulty through the latter part, and, “finally, her confinement was very long, protracted, and painful.” Possibly, any one of these circumstances,—the intemperance, hereditary taint, intermarriage of relatives, the fright, illness, or difficult parturition, occurring alone, would not have produced idiocy in this case, for the same parents had other children that were not idiotic; yet any one of these may have the effect very materially to diminish what would otherwise have been the bodily and mental vigor of the child, to lower his tone of life, and carry him so far toward idiocy; and thus the added or combined effect of all these depressing causes may be sufficient to produce the idiocy that was manifested in the offspring.

If, as we have supposed, the parents can give to their offspring no other constitution than that which they possess at the time when they impart their life to the child, then the low organization, the ill-health, the folly, the wickedness of the parents, or whatever reduces their power of body or mind below the normal standard, must prepare the way for a still greater deterioration or lower degradation in their children. If, then, these hereditary weaknesses in the children are not overcome by proper training, or, if their hereditary tendencies are not resisted and counteracted by the force of proper education and management, by the cultivation of the highest health and the avoidance of every depressing cause acting on life, and of every exciting cause of disease or idiocy, these children will transmit to the next generation a lower degree of life.

These causes existing in the parents produce idiocy in the children, or that feeble and imperfect organization upon which, when other exciting causes may be added, idiocy may supervene.

Besides the hereditary taint or depression of constitution, there are many personal causes which operate directly upon the subject, and produce original idiocy in him.

Masturbation appears to be the most prominent among these

depressing causes. The habits of 389 idiots were examined in regard to this matter, and 204—more than half—were found to be addicted to it. And what is still more worthy of notice, several children—two of four years, one of seven, two of eight, five of nine, one of 10, two of 11, three of 12, and one of 13,—17 not yet 14 years old,—were given to this disgusting and exhausting habit. No. 447 is stated to have been “healthy and intelligent until taught masturbation at six.” No. 343 is only nine years old, and has been addicted to “masturbation *many* years.”

In some this habit is irrepressible, and in some it is “openly and shamelessly indulged.” It does not always cease with youth, but is, in many, continued far beyond the middle age; eight idiots between 50 and 60, nine between 60 and 70, one 78, and one 80 years old, are reported as still addicted to this vice.

The venereal appetite, either from original organization or from frequent provocation and indulgence, is very strong in idiots. Besides the many who are reported as masturbating, or as open prostitutes, 15 are reported as “very lustful,” or given to “excessive venery”; and even four idiots, who are more than 60 years old, and one nearly 70, indulge in this vice. One of 63 is given to “shameless venery,” and another 64 is “still lustful to excess.”

Intemperance and fits are also prominent among the supposed exciting causes of supervened idiocy.

These habits and conditions of the parents and progenitors of idiots, and of the idiots themselves, are thus stated, not as the entire and unquestioned causes of their present low state, but as the probable causes, and such as are supposed to be so by the families or acquaintances of the idiots.

Besides the several items which are arranged in 40 columns and registered against each individual, as before stated, there are also some other remarks which could not be so easily classified. We are unable to give any farther analysis of these, and yet we offer some quotations as specimens.

- “No. 57. Supposed cause, violence during parturition, sickly gestation; subject to fits till 14.
- 58. Supposed cause, drunkenness of mother in gestation.
- 59. { Parents related and subject to insanity. Of eight children, four
- 60. { are idiots and four deformed.
- 61. Parents intemperate.
- 62. Parents related; had 16 scrofulous children, three of them idiots.
- 63. Brother to 403; parents drunkards.
- 64. Supposed cause, sickly gestation.
- 65. Father drunkard, and mother scrofulous.
- 66. Parents scrofulous and sickly.”

- “No. 162. Deformed, gluttonous, and pachydermatous.
 163. From masturbation and gluttony.
 164. Insane and intemperate at 20 years of age.
 165. Full of sores, and always puny; skin pachydermatous.
 166. Salivated in infancy; effects still continued.
 167. Mother had fits during gestation, and received a blow upon the abdomen.
 168. Mother and grandmother scrofulous; nephew to above.
 169. Fits in childhood, and formerly a drunkard.
 170. Mother a simpleton. He is given to masturbation and venery.
 171. Scrofulous and deformed; growth of bones arrested early.
 172. { The parents of these were simpletons, cousins, and drunkards;
 173. { have four children foolish.”
- “No. 339. Father drunkard, and the race all scrofulous.
 340. Mother insane, cousin idiotic.
 341. { Brothers; only children of a scrofulous mother and a drunken
 342. { father; masturbation and fits from 10 years old.
 343. Father intemperate; masturbation many years.
 344. { Masturbation; very scrofulous breed.
 345. { Brother of the above.
 346. Very scrofulous breed.
 347. Gluttonous; parents intemperate; mother a prostitute; sister a simpleton.
 348. Very scrofulous mother; father has healthy children by another wife.
 349. Father drunkard; full of scrofulous sores.”

These show from what a low and degraded race most of the idiots have sprung, and what is their wretched condition now. Idiocy is thus so generally connected with, or produced by, the depressing causes acting on the health and life, with the exhausting habits, circumstances, or exposures that have nearly or remotely gone before it, or immediately co-exist with it, that it may be considered as merely the last step in vital depression.

In the long line of humanity, there are infinite numbers of degrees, from the highest, where is perfect health of body and mind, to the lowest, where is idiocy. Whatever wasting habit, circumstance, or exposure—such as intemperance, debauchery, gluttony, or other depressing cause—acts upon a person standing in any of these degrees, exhausts some of his vital power, and carries him downward, more or less, toward idiocy, and he is therefore a lower man, weak-minded or simple, or foolish, or idiotic, according to the force and protraction of the depressing cause or causes.

It is to be regretted that this commission could not have extended its inquiries through the whole State, and revealed the full extent of the misery and degradation that have thus fallen upon humanity. But this investigation was established only for a definite purpose,

which was to ascertain the number and condition of the idiots, and also whether these could be improved, and whether enough of them were teachable to justify the establishment of a school for them by the State. The government justly inferred that the 574 idiots who were examined, and whose condition and character were learned, were sufficient to indicate the character of the whole, and, therefore, discontinued the commission, and proceeded to provide the means of educating them.

Low and disheartening as is the picture which we have here given of the mental and physical condition of idiots, it is not without hope. Dr. Howe thinks that almost all of them—488 out of 574—are capable of improvement to a greater or less extent.

Two strong inducements for public action or interference to relieve or diminish idiocy, now present themselves. 1st. The enormous expense of supporting 1,400 persons—about one five-hundredth part of the whole population of this Commonwealth—in a state of idiocy; and, 2d. The motives of humanity to give, if possible, to these wretched creatures some idea of responsible life, some means and power of self-sustenance, and some self-respect.

There are two modes of action pointed out. One attempts to remedy or mitigate the evil by educating such of the idiots as can be provided with the means; the other strikes at the root of the future idiocy, and endeavors to remove the causes and prevent the recurrence of the disability hereafter. But we must confess, with great pain, that weighty as is the task to do the first, greater and more hopeless is the last. It is far easier to teach these stupid idiots, even to create intellect where it does not seem to exist, than to reform the morals of men and women whose habits or indulgences lead to idiocy in themselves, or in their children, or to impress upon the world the necessity of looking only to the interests of the next and future generations in their marriage contracts, and in the management of their own persons.

The extinction of idiocy must be a work of ages. Nevertheless, it can be accomplished in the course of time. The causes that weaken or corrupt the human constitution, and produce ill-health, or tendency to idiocy, or idiocy itself, may be removed. The successive generations of the weak, the unhealthy, and the tainted, may be each improved, and raised, and strengthened in some degree. By carefully educating the children of the feeble and corrupted families, by guarding them against the errors of their parents, by teaching them to avoid the exciting causes of idiocy, the hereditary taint may be kept dormant, and even diminished, until finally, through the course of successive generations, it shall be extinguished, and hereditary idiocy appear no more.

For the education of idiots there is encouragement to hope. The experiments which have been made in France, Switzerland, and Prussia, prove that many of these, who otherwise would be idiots of a low order, may, by proper training, be raised to such a condition that they may live in, and enjoy the comforts of, their families, and that others may be made self-dependent and pass respectably and happily through life.

This, however, requires a peculiar kind of training. The usual influences of home, and especially of the ordinary homes of idiots, and the teaching and discipline of common schools, are not sufficient for the education of this class of persons; they must have schools, teachers, and apparatus peculiarly adapted to their capacities and powers.

We believe that there were, until lately, no such schools in America, and that all the idiots of this continent were left to grope their way in their original darkness and degradation, except a few rare cases whose intelligent parents provided the extraordinary and proper means for their education.

The legislature of Massachusetts, at its last session, after receiving these reports from Dr. Howe, appropriated the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars annually, for three years, to educate ten idiots, in order to try the experiment, and the whole was placed under the general direction of Dr. Howe. Mr. James B. Richards was selected as a teacher, and went to Europe to visit the schools which are there in progress, and to learn their method of training and educating idiots. Mr. R. returned in September last, and in October opened his school at Boston with four idiots, and has now nine.

Although nothing decisive as to the extent of the power or the capacity of idiots can be inferred from this small experiment, and the short time during which these few have been under discipline and instruction, yet enough has been done to show that even these stupid and apparently unimpressible children can be roused and taught and influenced.

To form any proper notion of their progress, it is necessary to know their condition when they came to the school. One boy of fourteen was brought from a poorhouse, where he had always worn women's clothes. He is now dressed as other boys are, and enjoys his new garments, and uses them as properly as they do. He could not go up or down two steps without getting upon his hands and knees; now he walks up and down, though with some hesitancy, in the common manner. Five of these boys had no control of their urinal or alvine evacuations; now they control them during the day, and mostly during the night. They could not be trusted to feed themselves, and some would steal food from the kitchen or elsewhere, and

one would devour the offal that was set aside for the swine. Now, they all eat as other boys, under the supervision of their teachers, who determine the quantity of their food. One, who had no use of his feet, can now walk with assistance. Within the first month, one boy of nine years learned to throw wood from the ground on a pile, and another made still farther progress, and learned to pile it straight, laying the sticks parallel with each other. They learned to climb a ladder on the under side, with their hands and feet, and when they reach the top, they can turn around one of the rails to the other side, and return by the upper surface. They could not walk on either side of the ladder when they entered the school in October.

They had no conception of numbers, or of the size or form of objects. Now some of them can count as far as *six* or *seven*; they understand the difference between a square and round object, and will select a quart or a peck, or other measures, when asked to do so.

In their whole appearance and manner there is more of self-respect and intelligence and activity, and one cannot fail to observe the very great difference in the expression of their countenance, when comparing their daguerreotype-likenesses, which were taken when they entered, with their faces as they now appear.

It will not be suspected that we make these statements as proofs of great success or progress, but only to show that the beginning of the experiment offers sufficient encouragement for perseverance; that the idiot's mind is not entirely blank; and that he is not, like the brutes, immovably fixed in the present low rank, and irrecoverably doomed to remain there in darkness and degradation forever.

E. J.

[C.]

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[D .]

TERMS OF ADMISSION, ETC.

The best age for admission is between nine and twelve years.

The institution is not intended for epileptic or for insane children, or for those who are incurably hydrocephalic or paralytic. None such will be retained, to the exclusion of more improvable subjects.

Children will be received on trial for one month, at the end of which time a report upon the case will be made to the parents.

Children must come well provided with plain, strong clothing, and stout shoes for walking in any weather. These must be renewed as often as is necessary, at the expense of the applicants. Those who tear and destroy their clothing must be provided with garments made expressly for them, and of such form and texture as not to be easily torn.

Sufficient surety will be required for the clothing of the pupils, for their board and care in vacation, and for their removal whenever they may be discharged.

The children of indigent parents in Massachusetts can secure gratuitous admission by application to the governor.* For others, a small charge will be made, proportionate to the means of the parents, and the trouble and cost of treating them.

Persons applying for the admission of children as beneficiaries of Massachusetts must fill out certain blanks, the form of which is as follows :—

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR BENEFICIARIES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

, 18 .

To His Excellency the Governor.

SIR :—The undersigned, citizen of Massachusetts, and inhabitant of the town of _____, respectfully represents that his son [or daughter],† named _____, and aged _____ years, is so deficient in intellect that he cannot be taught in the common schools, as other

* The same applies to the other New England States.

† If a town pauper, the overseers of the poor may apply as for their ward.

youth are ; and he therefore requests that your Excellency would recommend him for admission as a pupil to the Massachusetts School for teaching and training Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth as a state beneficiary.

Respectfully yours, — —.

The application should be accompanied by two certificates, in the following form :—

I.

I, , one of the selectmen of the town of , hereby certify that, in my opinion, is not wealthy, and could not well afford to pay \$300 per year for the instruction of at the School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth.

(Signed) — —.

II.

I, , citizen of Massachusetts, physician, and practitioner in the town of , hereby certify that I have examined , and find that he is not insane, but is so deficient in mental ability that he cannot be taught in the common schools, as others of his age are.

His bodily health is , and he has no cutaneous or contagious disorder.

(Signed) — —.

N. B.—The physician is earnestly requested to state, in writing, his opinion of the *cause* of the person's mental deficiency ; to state whether he is or has been epileptic ; also to mention any organic or functional peculiarity that he may have observed. It may be greatly to the advantage of the person, that the physician should send in writing a full and minute account of the case, with his own thoughts and suggestions in regard to it.

If the applicant is admitted as a beneficiary, he must be provided with a paper signed by two responsible persons, in form of a guaranty for removal, as follows :—

We, the undersigned, citizens of Massachusetts, and householders in the town of , respectively pledge ourselves that, should be received into the Massachusetts School for teaching and training Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth, he shall be kept properly supplied with decent clothing, that he shall be removed during vacations (if his removal be required), and that, whenever he shall be

discharged, he shall be removed at once, and the institution relieved from all responsibility for his support.

(Signed) ———.

For private pupils, the following bond is required to be signed by two responsible persons, one of whom must be known to the trustees:—

In consideration of _____ being admitted a pupil into the Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth, at our request, we, the undersigned, jointly and severally promise the said school to pay the superintendent thereof, at said school, quarterly in advance, on the first days of January, April, July, and October, the rate of board and tuition which may from time to time be determined by the trustees of said school for said pupil, to provide or pay for all requisite clothing and other things necessary or proper for the health and comfort of said pupil, to pay for all proper expenses incurred for the return of said pupil to the school in case of elopement, to pay for support of said pupil in vacation, to remove said pupil when discharged, to reimburse funeral expenses in case of death, and, if removed against the advice and consent of the superintendent before the expiration of three calendar months, to pay board for thirteen weeks.

For further particulars, address Dr. S. G. HOWE, Boston.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

By the Parents or Friends of the Applicants for Admission to the School.

1. What is the applicant's name and age?
2. Where was he [or she] born?
3. Was the birth at the full period of gestation?
4. Were there any extraordinary circumstances attendant upon the delivery? If so, describe them.
5. What has been the general health and bodily condition of the applicant?
6. At what period was it first observed that there was anything peculiar about the applicant?

7. Has there been observed, at any time since birth, anything peculiar in the shape or condition of the head?

8. Does the head now differ in shape or condition from the head of an ordinary person of the same age?

9. What is now the general health of the applicant?

10. Is he [or she] now subject, or has he [or she] ever been subject, to epilepsy, or fits of any kind?

11. Describe the fits, if any?

12. What is now the applicant's weight?

13. What is now the applicant's height?

14. Is there any infirmity of body, or any striking peculiarity?

15. How is the appetite for food and drink?

16. Is the applicant active and vigorous? Does he [or she] run about and notice things, or the contrary?

17. What is the state of the sense of sight? Is the eye bright or dull?

18. What is the state of the sense of hearing? Is it quick or sluggish?

19. Does the applicant show any sensibility to musical sounds?

20. What is the state of the sense of smell?

21. What is the state of the sense of taste? Is he [or she] particular about what he [or she] eats? or will he [or she] swallow things without regard to taste?

22. Is he [or she] gluttonous?

23. What are the habits with regard to personal cleanliness?

24. Can he [or she] talk?—that is, make a regular sentence, containing nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, etc.?

25. Does he [or she] use understandingly such words as *or* and *if*?

26. Please give several specimens of the mode of talking, and be careful to put down the words exactly as he [or she] uses them.

27. Can he [or she] dress and undress without help?

28. Can he [or she] feed without help?

29. Does he [or she] use a spoon, or knife and fork?

30. Can he [or she] tie his [or her] shoe-string in a regular knot?

31. Can he [or she] do any work? and what kind?

32. What are his [or her] personal habits?

33. Does he [or she] hide, break, or destroy things?

34. Does he [or she] get up in the night and wander about?

35. Is he [or she] obedient?

36. Does he [or she] come when called?
37. Does he [or she] go astray?
38. Is he [or she] passionate?
39. Is he [or she] given to self-abuse or masturbation?
40. Has there been such watchfulness, that you can be sure the applicant is free from all habits of self-pollution?
41. Please state any facts that may show the peculiar character of the applicant.
42. Of what country was the father of the applicant a native?
43. What was the general bodily condition and health of the father? Was he vigorous and healthy, or the contrary?
44. Was the father of the applicant scrofulous, or was he subject to fits?
45. Were all his senses perfect?
46. Was he always a temperate man?
47. About how old was he when the applicant was born?
48. Was there any known peculiarity in the family of the father of the applicant?—that is, were any of the grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, or cousins, blind, deaf, or insane, or afflicted with any infirmity of body or mind?
49. If dead, at what age did the father die, and of what disorder?
50. Where was the mother of the applicant born?
51. What was the general bodily condition of the mother of the applicant?—strong and healthy, or the contrary?
52. Was she scrofulous, or ever subject to fits?
53. Were all her senses perfect?
54. Was she always a temperate woman?
55. About how old was she when the applicant was born?
56. How many children had she before the applicant was born?
57. Was there anything peculiar in the bodily or mental condition of the other children?
58. What was the state of the mother's health during the time she was pregnant with the applicant?
59. Was she subject to any bodily infirmity or severe sickness, or to any extraordinary mental emotion or fright, great sorrow, or the like?
60. Was she related by blood to her husband? If so, in what degree—first, second or third cousins?
61. If dead, at what age did she die, and of what disorder?

62. Was there any known peculiarity in her family?—that is, were any of her grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, sisters, brothers, children, or cousins, either blind or deaf, or insane, or afflicted with any infirmity of body or mind?

63. What are the pecuniary means of the parents or immediate relatives of the applicant?

64. How much can they afford to pay towards the support and education of the applicant?

65. What are the names of the father and mother?

66. What is the post-office address of the parents or other responsible friends?

